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TRENDS AND MOVEMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY ARABIC POETRY

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the trends and movements of contemporary Arabic poetry. It is arranged in two parts and comprises an introduction, ten chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography.

In the introduction the method followed in writing this work is explained and compared with various methods of writing literary history.

Part I, in two chapters, is a study of the cultural roots of contemporary Arabic poetry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A section depicts the emergence in the nineteenth century of a healthy poetic revival along Classical lines.

Part II: The first chapter deals with the confirmation of neo-Classicism, the early infiltration of Romanticism, and the first signs of interest in new ideas and forms.

The second chapter examines the poetry of the Immigrant Arab poets in Latin America and the United States, known as Mahjar poetry. The North American contribution, which established the trend of Romanticism in Arabic poetry, is shown to be radically different from the South American, which continued to be mainly along Classical lines.

Chapter 3 deals with the change of poetic sensibility and critical criteria in the Arab world.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the discussion of the Romantic movement in the poetry of the Arab East. The achievements of modern Arab Romantics are assessed and the rise of decadent streaks is discussed.

Chapter 5 deals with the Symbolist trend in contemporary poetry, assesses the depth and importance of this experiment and shows its relativity to the current poetic scene.

The output of critics Marūn ʿAbbūd and Muḥammad Mandūr has been instrumental in bringing about poetic change. Chapter 6 represents a critical evaluation of their roles and methods.

Chapter 7 gives an account of the beginning of the free verse movement, the theorisation which accompanied its initial stages, the vehement controversy it produced, and the vital role of avant-garde magazines. The categories of "committed poetry" and "platform poetry" are also dealt with.

Chapter 8 is devoted to the technical achievements of contemporary poetry in the sphere of form (with a study of prose poetry); tone; attitude and themes; diction; dramatic poetry; imagery; and obliquities: symbol, allusion, folklore , myth and archetype.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

I

Many books have been written on contemporary Arabic poetry and every year their number grows. One would be led, therefore, to believe that any new attempt to write about contemporary Arabic poetry would merely be a repetition or an elaboration on an already exhausted theme. However, this is far from being true. While the historical development of this poetry has been the subject of several partial studies, no single full account has been attempted of this poetry as an art form. The enormous changes it has undergone in technique, form, tone, attitude, emotion, imagery, diction and theme since its revival in the nineteenth century have not been followed up in any comprehensive fashion that can furnish the reader with a continuous line of development. For this purpose, in attempting to examine the trends and movements of Arabic poetry in contemporary times, it has been necessary to trace them back to their roots in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The development of modern Arabic poetry took on an organic growth, evolving along lines determined, not only by social and cultural developments, but largely also by artistic needs. Its evolution is not only a fascinating story for those interested in modern Arabic poetry as an expression of a particular people who have undergone great changes in all the aspects of their life, but is also a demonstration both extensive and intensive of artistic development over a relatively short period of time. Hence it is also of interest to all critics of poetry generally.

This study proposes, therefore, to tell the story of the Arab poetic genius in contemporary times. It is through the sustained effort of this genius that modern Arabic poetry has developed steadily through the decades despite the many hindrances put in its way by traditional elements. It has therefore been necessary in dealing with the achievements of this genius, also to pause in order to look at the activity and the

work of those whose influence has hindered or sought to hinder its development.

One of the greatest difficulties with which a writer is faced when trying to review contemporary Arabic poetry as a whole is the vastness and diversity of the field he has to cover in that the centre of gravity of this movement has tended to shift in modern times from one Arab country to another. Regional differences in temperament, cultural background and poetic traditions have contributed greatly to the richness and variety of the various poetic experiments but have also been responsible for the development of some negative streaks, although these were mostly of a regional character. The full story of modern Arabic poetry can be covered only by examining the poetry of all the countries which played an active part in its development and by attempting to put each contribution in its right place. By "active part" is meant here that the poetic contribution of any particular country has entered the living stream of modern Arabic poetry, imposing itself on a considerable reading public outside its own boundaries, or that it has at least made its influence on the poets whose own work has proved decisive in this development. It will be clear, therefore, that were some poetic genius to have written in isolation from the main stream of Arabic poetry remaining unknown to the poets and critics of the Arab world, his poetry would not come within the scope of this work. The poetry of several Arab countries must therefore be left untreated. This will be better understood if one bears in mind that this is the story of the poetic evolution and not merely the recounting of the details of literary history. It is a critical study of the various factors that have promoted or hindered the main stream and is not directly concerned with isolated streams.

II

During the relatively short period since the Arab poetic revival in modern times, a little over a hundred years, Arabic poetry has undergone

drastic changes, and it is these changes that constitute the subject of this work. Such changes were accompanied by similar ones in the Arab people themselves in all spheres: political, social, economic, cultural and psychological. Since this is a history of a poetry written in the Classical language, it deals with the contribution of those poets who belong to the more cultured group of men and women in the Arab world. A higher degree of consciousness is expected here, therefore, and a nature at least as complex as any among the more cultivated individuals in the different Arab countries. The role played by this group of individuals was more complex and their reaction to change more profound than that of the average educated man. A study, therefore, that deals with the analysis of the changes that have taken place in the psyche and consciousness of these individuals would need a highly specialised approach. A writer on literary history would need the help of the historian, the economist, the sociologist, the historian of ideas and culture, and the social psychologist. The description of the political life of the Arab world alone is an exhaustive study, especially so in an introduction to a work that deals with the evolution of poetry, because the political event, before it is discussed, must be translated into its psychological significance before it is shown to be relevant to the literary study at hand. Many landmarks of the political history of the Arab world in the last century and a half have been arbitrarily accepted as landmarks of poetic change. To give a single example, certain critics have related the Romantic movement, at least in part, to the failure of the 1919 revolution in Egypt, a very astonishing conclusion since it was by no means limited to Egypt nor could it be tied to that particular date; it had already begun among the Arab poets in North America, and even in Egypt itself before that date.

It should not follow from this that no particular political event could exercise a profound direct influence on poetry, but it is not the fact that an event has taken place that is significant in a study of this sort. It is the reaction of the people to it and their capacity to

assimilate the full meaning of that event that is significant.

Moreover, political events are never sufficient alone to explain the external forces at play on poetry. Cultural, social and economic forces are inseparable from the political forces.

A sustained process of conditioning of the Arab individual to life in the modern world was taking place. The important developments in Arab life whether political, cultural, sociological or economic, if seen to be particularly effective on poetry at a certain period, will be mentioned throughout the following work. Otherwise the general scene must form a kind of moving picture in the background. But we could deal with it here only in the abstract. It is a picture of constant change. The best way to begin is to recognise the immense difference that has taken place over the years in the educated individual in the Arab world. It would not perhaps be untrue to think of the men who were writing in the nineteenth century as belonging to a different order, to a Mediaeval culture with which the modern life of contemporary avant garde authors (sophisticated, rebellious and thinking mainly on secular lines) has very little in common and which was virtually unaware of the culture of the men who were writing literature in Europe.

The process of metamorphosis was accomplished through a realisation, sometimes gradual, at others extremely sudden, of the presence of a happier, more enlightened, more progressive life outside their wide borders. From the Napoleonic invasion of 1798 to the 1948 Palestine catastrophe, the Arab world was exposed to a series of disasters which shook its very foundations.

The outer enemy is the first menace which the Arabs discovered. The awareness of this outer enemy and his role in the act of oppression, deprivation and impoverishment inflicted upon them was a unifying force which integrated, to some extent, their efforts and attitudes. The fact that the nation was steeped in ignorance, stagnation, stupor and squalor in addition to an inner spiritual emptiness, started to dawn on them only

at the turn of the century but became a full emotional realisation in the late forties after the Palestine disaster. Their first awareness of their backwardness was mixed with feelings of pride in past Arab glory and accomplishments, and a hope of imminent possibilities of revival and independence. The absolute failure of the old order of things did not dominate their way of thinking early in the century, although men like Salāmah Mūsā did hold that "national independence was of no value in itself, but must be combined with internal change. Reform and independence go together and the enemies of the two have always been allies: European imperialists and Egyptian reactionaries have worked together."[1]

The whole Arab world in this century started to be exposed to the same currents of thought blowing on it from Western and Eastern Europe, all be it certain Arab countries were more directly and strongly influenced than others. Their modern history is a history of revolt and strife, of heart wrenching disappointments and failed endeavours, and of renewed strife and revolt. This, plus the constant cultural contacts were able finally to produce the archetype of the more sophisticated modern Arab poet: divided, deeply wounded, dominated by varying attitudes of anger, rejection and dread.

III

When Arab literary historians relate the history of modern Arabic poetry to political events, they do so because they feel, rightly, that poetry and politics have always been connected in modern times. However, a writer on the effects of politics on poetry must guard against regarding the change in theme as the only criterion with which he is concerned. Usually the majority of poets react to a particular poetic event by writing directly about it without achieving any change in the more decisive element of poetry. But theme alone is no criterion of value in a poem, nor does the fact that a poet is dealing with a contemporary event indicate that he is really modern in outlook.

The aim of a critic who is studying the connection of politics with

poetry must be to try to find the extent to which politics have influenced it as an art. This is certainly a more difficult course of study since changes in the artistic aspects of poetry are more subtle and need finer critical criteria. The student of modern Arabic poetry might be surprised to find that politics have had two contradictory effects on the art of poetry, one positive and renovating, the other reactionary and conventional This will be elaborated in its proper places in this work.

IV

Modern Arab writers on literary history have resorted to several methods of writing. Some of these methods are a continuation of the usual methods of writing literary history in Arabic, others have benefited by some Western writers. The following are the main types of literary history in modern Arabic literature:

a. Many literary histories are a collection of biographies, written in the usual encyclopaedic manner. Some of these may include some extracts of the poetry of the persons dealt with. Some of these writers try to form some critical opinion on the poets and writers discussed, but this is often of little help because it is counteracted by the fact that they, right from the beginning, do not show any selectiveness in their choice of poets and writers but crowd their books with as many as they can lay hands on.[2] Such books are in fact neither literary histories nor books of criticism, for they neither speak of literary evolution, nor do they discuss poetry and literature with a reference to a definite scale of values.[3]

b. Other writers divide the history of poetry in a chronological order, by calendar centuries, half or any other part of a century, by decades or in an annalistic fashion.[4] However, the mere fact of chronological sequence is not enough to explain historical development. Most literary histories seem to prefer this type. While this is unavoidable in writing on modern Arabic poetry since this poetry grew in sophistication and depth steadily over the years, a strict application of the chronological order

is not possible, because Arabic poetry did not develop in the same degree and order all over the Arab world.[5] This will be elaborated more fully in paragraph nine of the introduction.

c. Several books on literature have treated poetry as a document for national growth and the study of ideas and national institutions. R.Wellek, in dealing with this kind of literary history throws doubts on the correctness of the relation between history and literature. He asks: "How far can literature be considered a reliable document for cultural history? Should we not consider the obliqueness between literature and life, the difficulties and the dangers of confusing literature with documents, the specific nature of a fictional statement?"[6] Surely it would be an oversimplification of the highly complex nature of artistic growth to measure this growth by the changes effected in the content only. Poetry as an art has its own criteria of values. It also has its own conventions and dimensions and cannot be regarded as an accurate social or political document. There are always other factors pertaining to the domain of art which interfere and impose themselves on the poet. There is for example the weight of the poetic traditions on the conventional poet who, because of the self-assertive nature of the traditional approach, diction, emotion and idiom on him is for ever drawn to adhere to a more traditional point of view. Thus the traditional rhetoric with its pompous insistence on bravado and fakhr took hold of the conventional nationalistic poet of the fifties and stifled the deeper feelings of rebellion, rejection and despair that were dominant among the more cultivated individuals in the Arab world.

Another great factor which might confuse the direct relationship between events and poetry is that of the influence of foreign poetry. In an age of rapid poetic and cultural borrowing from foreign fields, there is bound to be a certain amount of simulation and pretentiousness, even among some good poets. Their poetry might not be representative even of what F.N.W. Bateson calls "the point of maximum consciousness"[7] of their

generation. When Sa'īd 'Aql was writing his Symbolist poetry in the thirties and forties many grave events were happening in the Arab World, but his poetry was not in line with them. The Symbolism of the thirties and forties had little to do with the spirit of the Arab world except from the point of view that it constituted a cultural adventure which the Arab world appreciated at the time.

This should not mean that a social historian or psychologist can find no material for his field of work in poetry, for he will indeed do so.[8] E. Greenlaw asserts that the literary contribution may be taken as documentary material to help appraise the civilisation of the period.[9] However, such an appraisal must be related to an inner knowledge of all the forces that make poetry, and these are by no means limited to social and cultural factors. To return to the example of the national poetry of the fifties one can easily say that the conventional poets who tried to be leaders in a general national awakening, contributed very little to the self-knowledge which is the greatest 'social' function of poetry. In this poetry the historian of civilisation and ideas will find nothing which is authentically representative or new. This poetry by no means represents the highest growth of the national mind. There is very little in this poetry which is different in spirit and human consciousness from similar national poetry written much earlier in the century. Would this mean then that the Arab mind and personality have not developed in depth and sophistication over these crowded decades in which so much has happened?

Moreover, in any study on poetry what we expect to read is something about poetry itself not a document of ideas and a list of themes. We want to know about poetry as an art not as "an illustration of national and social themes".[10] When a writer is looking at poetry as a social document illustrating some theme or another, he will inevitably ignore value judgements and he will perforce take into account poetry "which has more life than art in it",[11] as J. Baily puts it, a poetry

which might be "full of truth and moral insight, but being deficient in art" fails to be "a permanent factor in life".[12]

There is no doubt that this way of writing literary history is a much easier method than the one which discusses the artistic aspects and development of poetry. Artistic growth is subtle and aesthetic problems can be illusive to the less sensitive critic. The external functions of art are "much more accessible to treatment in terms of intellectual concepts than the aesthetic function and preference is therefore given to an examination of the external relations of a work of art, to the social context to which it refers, to the psychology of the author, to its communicative contents."[13] Such a history will have, moreover, to accumulate a great amount of material and the writer will find himself dealing more with the less able poets of a period because it is "authors of minor artistic ability and weak personality [who] usually take protective colouring in relation to their time and place more supinely than do their superiors, [and] their work can [therefore] be profitably studied in embodying streams of intellectual tendencies - political, religious, social and aesthetic".[14] There are several books of this kind of literary history in modern Arabic.[15]

d. More sophisticated works on the history of modern Arabic poetry have tried to explain poetry in terms of its setting. This takes into account the external social, political, psychological and economic influences on a work of art. The nineteenth century French critic, H. Taine, was the greatest propagator of this idea on which he expostulated in his [illegible] history of English literature, although other writers before him had worked in this direction.[16] His method of writing literary history is based on the influence on art by what he calls "the moment, the race and the milieu".[17] This takes particular account of the historical origins of works of literature, of the role of external elements of environment and events in determining literary change.[18]

There are, however, other types of deterministic interpretation of literature. At the time of Taine another Frenchman, F. Sainte-Beuve, postulated another deterministic method of interpreting literature. His method was to interpret works of art in the light of the personalities behind them.[19] The psychology of the writer plays a primary role in the nature of the work he creates.

Each of these two methods has had further developments which played a major role in the history of criticism and of literary history in the twentieth century. Taine's method of historical environmental determinism bred yet another factor, that inspired by the Dialectical Materialism propagated by Marx and Engels in the middle of the nineteenth century. This related the works of literature to what Marx and Engels called "the economic base",[20] and was far less simple than Taine's. The propagators of this idea believed that the creative authors did not only belong to the superstructure of human activity, but also that they tended to constitute social groups.[21] Such terms as bourgeois shrinkings and middle class snobbery began to have a meaning in the interpretation of literature, and for the first time a creative writer or poet was seen to produce the kind of particular sentiment generated by his class in society, i.e. by the economic basis of his existence. Wilson tries to show how the idea of political committment evolved after Marx and Engels.[22] His assessment of Trotsky's concepts in Literature and Revolution, 1924, however, is wrong. Far from praising or rebuking a writer according to his harmony or dissension with the aims of the government, Trotsky insists that "Marxist methods are not the same as the artistic".[23]

A development of Sainte-Beuve's psychological method was the psychoanalytical method of Sigmund Freud. This method takes care of the biographical incidents in a creative writer's life. It also finds great interest and significant meaning in emotional patterns which repeat themselves in an artist's work and in recurring attitudes and compulsions.[24]

These are the four major deterministic methods employed in the interpretation of literature, but other approaches exist most of which combine two of these methods. In modern Arabic literary histories, however, it is more usual to find writers who employ one of the two socially based methods, rather than the psychology based ones.[25] The interpretation of literature in the light of the personalities behind them is not much used in writings on modern Arabic poetry.[26] This is fortunate, because such kinds of analytic study need a high degree of specialisation which very few writers have. Even in the West one reads criticism of "pseudo-scientific criticism and equally misleading pseudoaesthetic writings by analysis",[27] attempted by different Western critics in this century.

What are the advantages and dangers of the deterministic method in literary interpretation? It is certainly impossible to deny "that a work of art has some relation to the social context and that it is dependent on the mind of the author".[28] But the aesthetic function of a piece of art begins beyond the questions of external relations.[29] "Determinists, whether followers of Marx or Taine cannot explain why the same time, place, race, and economic conditions bring forth utterly different powers of artistic articulateness in individuals."[30] Moreover, causal explanation "usually singles out only one kind of external relationship, either psychological or social, and assumes that the work of literature can be completely reduced to being the consequences of these outside forces".[31] Thus the literary work is ignored in its central capacity as a work of art. This is an oversimplification of the matter and forgets that works of literature themselves influence society. It also fails to account for genius,[32] and ignores the possibility of having writers or poets writing relatively out of the context of their own time or society. The relationships mentioned in the previous paragraph are also valid here. An elaboration of this argument will be made in the course of this work wherever relavent.

The Marxist theory of literary interpretation is usually too much concerned with politics, with the importance of mass consumption, with the utilitarian use of poetry and art, and is too little concerned with the appreciation of the art of poetry itself. Critics tend to be more tolerant of the artistic weaknesses of a socially minded poet, and might malign the work of a great poet who seemed to be at odds with their own concept of life and politics.

Just as it is not possible to draw clear parallels between social and political life and a work of art, it is not possible to limit one's interpretation of a work of art to the knowledge of the personality of the artist. The most important reason for this is that we do not read a poem with the object of understanding its author. In fact what happens when we read good poetry is that we immediately translate the poet's experience into our own, or empathetically identify it with a more general experience. This argument could be carried much further if there were scope here.[33] The psychoanalytic method entails, of course, more danger. The most outstanding example of a dangerous and banal employment of it in modern Arabic is the constantly recurring idea, treated as often as not by persons lacking any critical or psychoanalytic knowledge, that the poetry of women poets must unfailingly show the symptoms of sexual repression.[34]

However, the advantages of employing external explanations can help, if applied carefully and knowledgeably, to throw some light on the reasons why certain motifs do occur and will tend to occur perhaps in the future, why it was not spontaneously easy to adopt certain forms and genres such as dramatic poetry for example, the reason why certain themes are more adhered to than others, etc. These and other questions could be even better explained if a critic had some correct knowledge of the "non-rational determination of men",[35] for the "beliefs and acts of individuals and social groups are not [merely] shaped by 'intellectual' processes, but by unavowed or 'subconscious' non-rational desires, passions or interests".[36] However,

these are elastic hypotheses and can entail many dangers and harbour many inaccuracies.[37] In general, despite the fact that literary historians in the future will benefit from the best of these methods when a higher degree of specialisation will be more available in these fields, at the present time it is safer to remember that "parallels between life and work, experience and expression are extremely dangerous and should be drawn with the utmost caution".[38]

e. The history of "individual pervasive and widely ramifying ideas or doctrines" has been adopted by some modern Arab writers to write literary histories. In such histories an idea or a group of related ideas are followed through the periods studied and their development and diversity pointed out. However, such books,[39] despite their value to those who want to understand something about the ideas that dominated the minds of men at certain periods of their history, give us no aesthetic knowledge of the poetry discussed. But the historian of ideas has a scope here to mitigate the absolute dependence of the social historian of literature on historical (political and social) factors. H. Clark explains this admirably when he says that "the historian of ideas can help to balance the tendency of the social historian to an extreme deterministic emphasis on environmental influences".[40] Hence an Arab literary historian who lays the emphasis of the nationalistic contribution in poetry on the actual political events alone, can be reminded that many of those ideas had been engendered in the first place directly from Western sources, notably from the ideas of the French revolution. He would be referred further to an excellent book written on the subject by Ra'īf al-Khouri entitled Al-Fikr al-'Arabi al-Hadīth wa Athar al-Thaurah fī Taujīhihi al-Siyāsi wa 'l-Ijtimā'i.[41]

f. The greatest number of books written on modern Arabic poetry by Arab writers deal either with the history of poetry in one particular Arab country,[42] or with the history of a poetic movement.[43] While there is every advantage in studying the history of a particular movement in poetry,

the history of poetry in one Arab country alone can never hope to give a full picture of the development of Arabic poetry. However, it is inevitable that such separate histories of poetry be written, because of the enormity of the task of writing on the poetry of the greatest part of the Arab world. But it must be kept in mind that none of these books can furnish a complete picture of the development of Arabic poetry as a whole.

V

This work follows a method which takes into account several factors at the same time. To the social and political factors it gives due attention as important forces behind the changes in the mind and consciousness of the creative Arab talent. It also seeks to examine the psychological changes in attitudes, points of view and emotional emphasis of the Arab people as these changes were reflected in their poetry. But it regards it of primary importance to attempt to know, with conviction, not the details of the political events and of the intellectual, national and social movements, but their effects (if any) on the various authors in any one epoch, as they were reflected in their works. The concern with the external factors is therefore more with the development of the Arab consciousness in modern times and with the variations in the patterns of Arab culture as a whole, and as far as it is possible to deduce such conclusions in a work of this kind. However, this being a work on the art of poetry, it carefully avoids becoming a history of the Arab mind in modern times, or modern Arab civilisation as reflected in its poetry. Such conclusions should be drawn, not by a critic writing on poetry but by a writer dedicated to the history of thought or civilisation. A writer on poetry must take into primary consideration the development of this art, its problems and its aesthetic values. The inner knowledge of the national mind and its philosophy of life should be an enormous help to the critic and historian of poetry because it can throw a great light on many of the aspects, inhibitions and possibilities of this poetry.

However, it should be regarded only as an aid and not an aim in such a study. In the light of this conclusion, therefore, one would tend to disagree with E. Greenlaw when he enthusiastically encourages the dedication of literary history to the study of the evolution of the national thought.[44]

Aside from the study of the times in which the poets and critics lived, the knowledge of the authors' personal education is followed up, as far as it is possible, the kind of schools they attended, the authors they read, the countries they visited, the contacts they made, the literary traditions they are likely to have inherited, for it is important to know the cultural affinities of these authors and the ideals, if any, which they embraced, in order to understand more fully the incentive and drive behind their contribution.

Above all this work is concerned with the evolution of modern poetry as an art. Important changes have happened to it over the decades, and the observation of these changes remains, when all has been said and done about external causes and influences, an activity within the subtle, intricate yet exciting domain of art. The evolution of poetry, while yielding in varying degrees of strength to the effects of external forces and acquired experience of inartistic nature, has an artistic life of its own and an internal process of change and development where forces of acquisition or resistance are constantly at play. These forces are active, however, only when the external environment of the artist is vibrant with life and experience. This would explain why when men live too long in an age of stagnation, their poetry stops growing and dwindles into barren, repetitive versifications.

Thus, according to the theory that art has its own internal laws of growth and development, an experiment introducing a new trend will only be successful if the poetic situation, at the specific time and place where the innovation is introduced, is ready for it. There are many forces, artistic and environmental, that could stand in the way of introducing change. From

an artistic point of view, the poetic tools might not be flexible enough to yield to change, or might still be in need of further strengthening in a certain direction. The experiment of Khalīl Muṭrān is a good example of this. Writing early in the century, his Romantic affinities were not able to supersede the strong Classical basis both of his early education and of the poetry of the epoch. Romanticism had to be achieved under different circumstances before it could take hold of the poetry of the following generation. There are many examples of this in modern Arabic poetry.

The concept of an internal development of art was evolved by another Frenchman, Ferdinand Brunti`ere, who based his theory on "Darwinian conception of biological evolution".[45] He considered that "literary genres perish and, whatever efforts are made, as soon as they reach a certain degree of perfection, they cannot but wither, languish and disappear".[46] To Brunti`ere, genres also became "transformed into higher and more differentiated genres, just as the species in the Darwinian concept of biological evolution".[47] Wellek is right in his criticism of this theory when he says that "genres do not die",[48] for the possibility that a genre or a certain poetic structure which has fallen out of favour might be revived in the future is always present. There are many reasons why this is so. In the first place, Bruntiere's concept suggests an infinity of genres to be created in the future, which is not acceptable, for the history of poetry has shown a remarkably limited scope for producing poetic genres. In the second place, poetic genres seem to be born in answer to aesthetic, social and spiritual needs. These needs disappear, but appear again, probably coloured by a modified culture. There is nothing to prevent the poetic genres which suited them once from reappearing themselves in modified forms if there should arise an aesthetic need for them (such as the need felt at the beginning of the Arab poetic renaissance for reviving the Classical qaṣīdah in its finest tradition, in order to bring new strength of diction,

form and phraseology into nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Arabic poetry), or a social and spiritual need (such as national resurgence, a war, a revolution, in which more heroic genres of poetry would automatically be revived, etc.). In the third place poetic genres, once successful, become a part of the poetic traditions of a nation and, even if they should be forgotten or become neglected for some time, lie always in readiness for rediscovery by a searching critical talent.

Wellek concludes his assessment of Bruntiere's theory by asserting that the value of his "genealogical" method is in its "attempt to explain literary change by an internal causal connection while he rejects the usual causal explanation by purely political or social events".[49] Wellek's own theory of the internal development of art is very illuminating. However, it is best to try to explain here the method evolved in this work without giving a complete elaboration of Wellek's theory because the method followed in this work was not based on any previous knowledge of it. The literary history which might have influenced this work is Louise Bogan's small volume on American poetry,[50] with which the present writer became acquainted in 1960.

The evolution of modern Arabic poetry is the history of this art in its constant aspiration towards contemporaneousness. Its sustained movement towards this goal describes a state of healthy internal evolution. This internal evolution is perforce a historical one because, in the first place, it marks the gradual change from one period to another, and in the second place, it is dependent on the historical role of Arabic poetry which tells the story of living poetic traditions, of definite experiments and of specific failures. No two poetries can have the same points of touch with their own poetic past, and hence no two poetries can develop in precisely the same way.

The sustained movement of modern Arabic poetry towards a goal of contemporaneousness aspired to bring Arabic poetry to a level with world

poetry, and not merely to suit the contemporary Arab framework of life and thought. A pattern can be detected in this evolution towards this goal, drawn by persisting attempts at introducing healthy change and at resisting premature experiments, guided by unconscious and sometimes instinctive drives. These drives came from the nature of art itself which, in a healthy age, grows constantly towards a scale of values that demands rigorous discipline. This, one is aware, raised many questions which, were one to elaborate on them, would need not only much more space but a highly specialised study. All that one can hope to do in this introduction is to discuss briefly the most persistent questions that impose themselves.

The first question that imposes itself here is what is this scale of values? Writers on this have not been in agreement over the epochs.[51] Different schools demand different things from poetry: symmetry, control, balance, internalisation of experience, suggestiveness, vision, the delineation of realistic experience,[52] etc. It is therefore apparent that the "historical process [the internal evolution of art through time] will produce ever new value forms hitherto unknown and unpredictable".[53] To the quick observer, Wellek here seems to be denying the presence of values as "essences" in art. He says that "only through 'tendencies' discoverable by a scale of values can historical evolution be discovered".[54] He speaks of art as transforming itself in a certain direction under the pressure of changing environment. "The direction can be discovered only in terms of reference to values."[55] This immediately conjures up an argument, for one feels that there must exist in all works of art through history a universal "essence" of values without which a piece of work cannot become art. Wilson bases his explanation of this question on the emotional reaction which a reader has,[56] i.e. he explains this "essence" by its effects. The identification of the essence of good poetry with any one particular element, say suggestiveness, or with any combination of elements is simply the shifting of the "emotional reaction to the recognition of the

element or elements."[57] But this emotional reaction, in his opinion, must be that of the "highly organised man" with the "wider intellectual range", and not that of "crude and limited people".[53]

However, this does not really contradict Wellek's concept of mobile "tendencies" which keep changing from one epoch to another. Wellek is speaking here not of essential, universally persistent values which Wilson fails to describe except by their effect, but of historical evolution, which cannot deal with persistent factors but takes their presence for granted. The constant universal factors which make art are not the only important elements in poetry, for otherwise there would have been no need for the essential phenomenon of "change" which has qualified the history of art throughout the world, and which has preserved the permanent values of art. The conclusion that one draws from this is that an artistic scale of values is made up of two sets of values, one subtle, complicated and extremely difficult to define which qualifies all good art, and another changing set of values which are imbued, to a great extent, in the historical process of art. This process prompts change and makes it essential at certain times, while resisting it at others. This process, moreover, is highly unconscious.

Here another question imposes itself. Does not this change often depend on the conscious knowledge of the artist that such a new scale of values exists? The answer is two-fold, for although it is usually instigated by a conscious knowledge of a different set of values, it is guided unconsciously by the demands of art at that particular moment of its history. This phenomenon has showed itself throughout the evolution of modern Arabic poetry and has been observed and commented upon in this work. In view of the many mistakes of judgment made by Arab writers writing on modern Arabic literature one feels one must insist that "there is a problem as that of the change, the development, the continuity of the art of literature",[59] and that a grasp of the internal development of the art of literature is essential.

Another point seems important here to support the above hypothesis. The fact that art only exists by virtue of the existence of the artistic genius in man should not mean that this genius can manipulate art out of its particular context not only in external time, but also in the artistic phase in which it is passing. Shaw··'s genius could not have assimilated the highly sophisticated concept of nineteenth century French Symbolism, but had he been in a position to do so (and this could have happened only if he had been brought quite early into very close contact with French poetry and culture) one cannot visualise an early achievement of the Symbolist doctrine in Arabic poetry at the turn of the century.

Modern Arabic poetry, because of the peculiar circumstances of its development in modern times, furnishes a most interesting field of study. It is the story of a resurrection and a complete re-vitalisation, of a gradual forging of links and of a steady evolution towards contemporaneousness within a comparatively short period of time. It is because of these considerations that it furnishes the literary historian with a most fertile field for the observation of the external influences on art and for its internal evolution.

VI

It is precisely because of the peculiar circumstances of modern Arabic poetry that the writing of this critical history enjoys the position of falling neatly between two points of extreme situations: a decorative, benighted, superficial kind of poetry dominated by a Mediaeval spirit on one side, and another greatly aware of man's condition, inspired by a contemporary spirit and experienced in modern poetic techniques on the other. Although the period of time covered by the evolution of Arabic poetry between these two points is short, it seems to have passed through most of the known phases and schools of modern poetry in say, England or France.

To achieve this, Arabic poetry needed the collaboration of both poets and critics. This is the case, one is aware, with the evolution of

all poetry. But in modern Arabic poetry the need was even greater, because there had to be an intensive (rather spontaneously instigated) campaign to bring home, in rational argument, the value and need of change, and to translate as many of Western poetic concepts as possible. It was the onslaught of new poetic theories at the beginning that preceded most of the experiments in poetry itself. The early decades in this century show the prevalence of theory over practice. Only a few poets were able to achieve a poetry nearly equal to their theories of it. But the most spectacular phenomenon showed itself at the beginning of the fifties. The poetic experiment was far superior to the theories written on it at the beginning of the movement of the new poetry.

This is why the history of modern Arabic poetry is firmly connected with the evolution of the poetic theory. This evolution is followed up, as much as possible in this work, but only the critical voices which have been central in the development of poetry are referred to, since this is not a history of criticism but of poetry.

VII

It is clear that in a work like this selectiveness is of paramount importance. It would be irrelevant to the central theme of this work to include the work of every poet who was able to win some sort of fame in his own time. The emphasis is rather on those poets or writers on poetry who were able to contribute a unique[60] or a directive influence[61] to the main stream of modern Arabic poetry, or on those whose work does not compare with the impression still held about them,[62] or on those whose influence hindered the flow of the main stream.[63] Sometimes, in examining a field, it seemed fit to go over a great variety of the poetic experiment in one period to show the range of poetic experience at one given time, especially so if this was the background of an important movement later on. This was the case, for example, with the Iraqi poets who dominated the poetic scene

in the first few decades of this century. They form the solid background to the most important movement in the history of Arabic poetry, that of the movement of Modern Poetry, so called for lack of a better term. This new movement was begun and nourished to maturity by the Iraqi poetic genius in the fifties of this century.

This work has a slightly different task to that of the regular literary historian, for it is not a full history of poetry but a critical account of its evolution. It was therefore irrelevant to include poets whose experiment was similar to that of a greater poet writing at the time. This is why poets like Ṣalāḥ Labaki who is a better poet than many who were examined, had to be omitted.

VIII

A problem which presented itself immediately was: do we judge the poets and critics from a contemporary point of view or from a point of view of the period in which they lived? The inevitability of using a contemporaneous outlook to a work of art is two-fold. Firstly, a contemporary writer benefits greatly from the longer perspective available to him by which to sieve the various poetic experiments of the past and to decide their actual service to later periods. In this he must be able to point out the poet's real contribution: whether he introduced new trends, strongly confirmed an already begun one, experimented in a virgin field, made new links with foreign fields, or naturally and spontaneously, as in the case of the poet Ilyās Farḥāt, wrote a better kind of poetry in an already established style.

Secondly, a judgment of values will have to stem from our own concept of artistic values at the present time, for "efficacy, contemporaneous success [of a past poetic contribution] cannot be a sufficient criterion of what is historically important".[64] However, this should not mean that we apply what is commonly called as "absolutism" in our judgment of past works of literature. It simply means that we must have acquired for

ourselves certain criteria of judgment that take into account both the permanent value of a past poetic contribution as well as a comparative and fair knowledge of past achievements. This would mitigate our views greatly when we judge a past work. We see it in perspective, in a chain of evolution, and in the case of modern Arabic poetry, we see it grow steadily from a point of weakness to a point of strength, which gives us an even greater scope for relative judgment. Absolutism drives the critic to a hard judgment of past achievements as he applies a strictly contemporary criterion to his evaluation of past poetry. An opposing method to this is that of relativism, when the writer tries to enter the mind of the period studied. This is rather difficult when one studies the mind of a far away period. Moreover, it is insufficient, for a past poetic contribution would then be judged merely from its contemporaneous point of view which ignores the immense value of knowing it now, in perspective. There is no doubt that the two points of view must be combined so that we can refer the past contribution to a scheme of values which is for ever renewing itself, and to admit to ourselves the fact of its existence.* For as Wellek says, "History does not exemplify general values ... /for/ the historical process will produce ever new forms of value",[65] i.e. we must refer past literature, not to our set of values, but to the values of its own time and all subsequent times.[66] By doing so we can discover the poet's own achievement in his own time, its importance to his own contemporaries as well as its influence on a following or the following generations. Such achievement can be discovered only if the condition of poetry and the poetic education of the period studied, as well as the particular mind of that period, are understood as empathitically as possible by the writer.

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* This is important, because a failure to understand this basic principle in poetic development caused painful controversy in the Arab world when the free verse movement began, at the end of the forties, a controversy which has increased as the movement became more complex and called itself the movement of Modern Poetry.

IX

The division of this work into periods turned out to be of major difficulty. Looking at contemporary Arabic poetry in its last period which began at the end of the forties, we are able for the first time in the history of modern Arabic poetry to recognise a harmony in the poetic situation all over the Arab world. There are the avant-garde poets who share more or less the same views on poetry, the conservative poets who are drastically opposed to the former, and the numerous groups of poets who adopt the middle way. But in previous periods poetic activity did not enjoy such a shared uniformity in every Arab country. Movements and trends began usually in one or two poetic fields arriving to other Arab countries later on. Thus Romanticism which began with the contribution of the Arab immigrants in North America at the turn of the century and reached its peak of influence in the thirties in Egypt and Lebanon, arrived in Iraq only in the forties.

It is undoubtedly much easier to describe definite movements than to describe a historical process made up of periods which embody movements as well as other trends and lingering characteristics of previous eras of poetry. But if one has to arrive finally at the description of the trends and movements in the contemporary period, one has to study their origins in whole periods where their roots lie.

The greatest difficulty furnished here is the diversity of the poetic experiments in several Arab countries, which participated in the evolution of modern Arabic poetry. Before the revival, the picture was as uniform as it was in the fifties. Poetry all over the Arab world was benighted.

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* This even includes countries where the poetic situation had not been progressive before. The poetry in countries like Kuwait, for example, is as divided between these spheres as the rest, despite the fact that Kuwait has not yet produced a poet of note in modern times. (Compare the poetry of Muḥammad al-Fāyiz, in his dīwān, Mudhakkarāt Baḥḥār, Kuwait, n.d. [but probably 1965], where he employs free verse, with that of a man like ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Baṣīr who, in both his verse and his views on poetry, stands at the centre of poetic reaction in that fast developing country. Al-Baṣīr does not seem to have a dīwān.)

This is of course a rough, highly generalised picture, but it serves the purpose at the moment. Between these two points the evolution of poetry in every Arab country has its own peaks of development. The problem of "discovering crests and troughs in the undulatory stream"[67] of poetry takes one from one poetic field to another, but knowing the importance of poetic traditions, of cultural contacts and of special regional temperaments, we have to keep a constant eye on what is going on in each of the poetic fields which contributed eventually to the enriching of this stream. This is why strict divisions into definite periods is not possible in the story of modern Arabic poetry. Because poetry is "not a passive reflection or copy of the political, social or even intellectual, development",[68] the periods of modern Arabic poetry could not be divided to fit the political changes. This should not mean that Arabic poetry is not, to use Wellek's words, "in constant interrelation with all the other activities",[69] for it is profoundly influenced by them, but its own "autonomous development" imposes a different kind of judgment. Being a study of the evolution of an art, the guiding criterion in this work was the literary situation which qualified the periods. Some movements lent great colour to certain periods like Romanticism in Egypt in the thirties and forties, while the same movement in Lebanon, although exemplified by a talent, that of Ilyās Abū Shabakah, which was greater than any of the Romantic talents in Egypt, did not dominate the same historical period in that country, because there appeared at the same time in Lebanon a great Symbolist poet, Sa'īd 'Aql, who left as great an impact on this period as his Romantic colleague. A literary period, therefore, is not identical with a historical period and is not "an arbitrary cross-section, but rather a time section dominated by a system of literary norms, whose introduction, spread, diversification, integration, and disappearance can be traced".[70] The history of a period will be written by following the continuous changes from one system of poetic criteria to another.

It will have a varying degree of unity, but it is by no means compactly united as a movement can be. Periods overlap, for "one set of methods and ideas is not completely superseded by another; but ..., on the contrary, it thrives in its teeth".[71] We have therefore, poets like Bisharah al-Khouri who could, to use Wilson's words, "hear, see and feel with the delicate senses of Romanticism"[72] while clinging to many of the neo-Classical attitudes and norms.

A literary period is therefore qualified by a system of literary norms that are dominant in it. The possible agreement of the literary activities of a period with the activities of politics, society, philosophy or culture come only after the phases of literary change have been distinguished clearly and studied in their capacity as artistic phases of the human creative activity.[73]

X

This work attempts to examine the contribution of individual poets where this contribution is seen to be relevant to the story of the evolution of modern Arabic poetry. It is only through the analysis of individual contributions that the various changes in the elements of poetry can be seen. However, poets who rose to fame in the fifties cannot be treated individually. Firstly, they are still experimenting, and secondly, and this applies also to Badr Shakir al-Sayyab (1926-1964), their influence has not yet been fully assimilated by their own generation. The poetry of this last epoch is therefore examined generally, and an attempt is made to describe its trends and movements, its basic changes and its initial achievement. Being still at its highest level of experimentation, the full history of this period and its final achievement can only be written several decades from now.

FOOTNOTES

1. A. Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, London, 1962, p.339.
2. A single example is Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ghani Ḥassan's book, Al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi fi 'l-Mahjar, Cairo, 1955.
3. For a comment on this kind of literary history see Antūn Ghaṭṭās Karam, "Madkhal ilā Dirāsat al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi 'l-Ḥadīth", Kitāb al-Īd, edited by J. Jabbūr, the American University of Beirut, 1967, pp.210-11.
4. Most literary histories in Arabic follow this method. One of the earliest is J. Zaidān's Tārīkh Ādāb al-Lughah al-ʿArabiyyah, Cairo, 1914, Vol.IV.
5. See Karam, op.cit., p.208.
6. "Six Types of Literary History", English Institute Essays, Columbia University Press, New York, 1946, p.115.
7. English Poetry, a Critical Introduction, London, 1966, p.66.
8. The Algerian Lounis Bouzid, for example, wrote a thesis for a Ph.D. degree in Social Science at the University of Algiers in 1965 entitled Le Roman Algerian pendent la Guerre d'Algerie. It treats the novel as a social document. See also Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn ʿAli Yūsuf, Al-Adab wa 'l-Mujtamaʿ, Cairo, 1962, in which the writer stresses the importance of literature as a social phenomenon; see especially pp.56-66.
9. The Province of Literary History, Baltimore, 1931, p.152.
10. Rene Wellek, "The Theory of Literary History", Travaux du cercle linguistique de Prague, Prague, 1936, VI, 173.
11. The Continuity of Letters, Oxford, 1923, p.8.
12. Ibid., p.9.
13. Wellek, "Theory", p.176.
14. Harry Hayden Clark, "Intellectual History and its Relation to a Balanced Study of American Literature," English Institute Annual, Columbia University Press, New York, 1940, pp.117-8.
15. Perhaps the most outstanding example of such a history is A. K. Maqdisi's book Al-Ittijāhāt al-Adabiyyah fi 'l-ʿĀlam al-ʿArabi 'l-Ḥadīth, second edition, Beirut, 1960. This is a marvellous record of national and social events as they were expressed by the creative writers and poets of the twentieth century. However, the book contains little critical evaluation, but accumulates a great hoard of material indiscriminately. Another book of lesser dimensions is Yūsuf ʿIzziddīn's Al-Shiʿr al-ʿIrāqi 'l-Ḥadīth wa Athar al-Tayyārāt al-Siyāsiyyah wa 'l-Ijtimāʿiyyah fīh, Baghdād, 1960. This book, contrary to its title, does not deal with the influence of the social and political trends on poetry but with the reflection of these social and political trends in poetry. The art of poetry is treated nearly exclusively as a document for national and social development.
16. See E. Wilson, The Triple Thinkers, London, 1952, pp.244-6.
17. Ibid., p.246.

18. See Muḥammad Mandūr, Fi 'l-Adab wa 'l-Naqd, third edition, Cairo, 1956, pp.36-9 and 62-3. (The book was first published in 1949).

19. Ibid., pp.59-77; Wilson, op.cit., p.251.

20. Ibid., p.247.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., pp.188-202 and 248-9; see also the essay of Nikolai Shamota, "On Tastes in Art /The Soviet View/", Aesthetics Today, ed. M. Philipson, Cleveland and New York, 1961, pp.27-32.

23 See Wilson, op.cit., p.250, and Trotsky, Literature and Revolution, trans. Rose Strunsky, New York, 1925, p.218.

24. Ibid., p.251.

25. Most histories of modern Arabic literature adopt a superficial simulation of Taine's method. A good if not perfect example is Anwar al-Ma'addāwi's book 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā, al-Shā'ir wa 'l-Insān, Baghdad, 1965, which has an introductory chapter on Romantic poetry in Egypt in which the author applies the method of social and political determinism. In the bulk of the book, however, he tries to analyse Ṭāhā's work in the light of the psychological method. The Marxist point of view was applied by Jalīl Kamāl al-Dīn in his book Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi al-Ḥadīth wa Rūḥ al-'Aṣr, Beirut, 1964; and by Maḥmūd Amīn al-'Ālim in his short study of modern Egyptian poetry published in Al-Ādāb, January, 1955. In the same year al-'Ālim published, in collaboration with 'Abd al-'Aẓīm Anīs their well known book Fi 'l-Thaqāfah al-Miṣriyyah (Beirut) in which the Marxist deterministic method was followed in several articles of applied criticism. However this is a book of criticism and not of literary history. Such books of criticism have been written for some time in the Arab world, and writers like Salāmah Mūsā, 'Umar Fākhūri, Shiḥādah al-Khūri, Ra'īf al-Khouri, Ḥusain Muruwwah, and others have been very influential.

26. There are probably no books on the history of modern Arabic literature which treat the subject in the light of the personalities which have formed this literature. Some books, however, have been written on the psychology of individual poets. However, these seem to have dealt mainly with poets from the Classical period. Examples are Ilī Ḥawi's interesting study of Ibn al-Rūmi, Ibn al-Rūmi, Fannuhu wa Nafsiyyatuhu, Beirut, 1959; 'Abbās Maḥmūd al-'Aqqād, Abū Nuwās al-Ḥasan Ibn Hāni', Dirāsah fī 'l-Taḥlīl al-Nafsi wa 'l-Naqd al-Tārīkhi, Cairo, n.d.; Muḥammad al-Nuwaihi Shakhsiyyat Bashshār, Cairo, 1951, and Nafsiyyat Abī Nuwās, Cairo, 1953. Several theoretical studies, however, were published on the relationship between literature and psychological studies. As early as 1947 Muḥammad Khalaf Allah published his book Min al-Wujhah al-Nafsiyyah fī Dirāsat al-Adab wa Naqdihi, Cairo, which adopts a rather simple approach to the relationship between psychology and literature. A much more complicated book is Muṣṭafa Suwaif's well known work, Al-Usus al-Nafsiyyah li 'l-Ibdā' al-Fanni, Cairo, 1951, which is an interesting study of the creative function in its relationship to psychology and psychoanalysis, quoting such writers as Freud, Jung and others. It is, however, too specialised a book to be of general benefit to the Arab reader. Another beneficial book is Shukri 'Ayyād's sophisticated study of the hero in mythology and literature, Al-Baṭal fi 'l-Adab wa 'l-Asāṭīr, Cairo, 1959, in which the author makes use of anthropological and psychological studies, depending a great deal on

James Frazer's study of ancient mythology, on Lord Raglan and Joseph Campbell's studies of the hero, on Freud's socio-anthropological studies and on several other writers. Several other books and a great number of articles on the theory of the relationship between literature and psychology exist. The application of psychoanalysis to a study of the modern period in Arabic poetry is very rare. One study, based exclusively on a Freudian analytic method, is Tawfīq Ṣāyigh's essay on 'Umar Abū Rīshah, "Abū Rīshah wa 'l-Ḥubb al-Mujazza'", Al-Ādāb, September, 1955, pp.15-20, which is discussed in the section on Abū Rīshah.

For more information on the different writings in Arabic on literary history and its methods and a list of the articles written on the subject prior to 1960 see M.Y. Najm, "Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah", Al-Adab al-'Arabi fī Āthār al-Dārisīn, the American University of Beirut, Beirut, 1961, pp.470-7.

27. Morris Philipson, op.cit., p.275.

28. Wellek, "Theory", p.176.

29. Ibid.

30. Clark, op.cit., p.118.

31. Wellek, "Six types of Literary History", p.117.

32. Wilson, op.cit., p.252.

33. For a discussion of the deficiencies of the psychological interpretation of literature see C.D. Lewis, "The Personal Heresy in Criticism", Essays and Studies, Oxford, 1934, Vol.XIX, 7-28; see especially his excellent analysis of poetic passages to illustrate his ideas, pp.9-18; see also the article of E.M.W. Tillyard, ibid., 1935, Vol.XX, 7-20, which is a rejoiner to the previous essay by Lewis; see also A.O. Lovejoy in the Journal of the History of Ideas, New York, January, 1940, I, i, 10, for an argument with Lewis; see also ibid., p.13 n.

34. One of the most poignant examples of this is the analysis of Bint al-Shāṭi' ('Ā'ishah 'Abd al-Raḥmān) of the poetry of women poets in Al-Shā'irah al-'Arabiyyah al-Mu'āṣirah, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1965, pp.54-61.

35. Lovejoy, op.cit., p.17.

36. Ibid., p.16.

37. Ibid., p.18.

38. Welleck, "Theory", p.181.

39. Examples are 'Umar al-Daqqāq, Al-Ittijāh al-Qaumi fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi al-Ḥadīth, second edition, Aleppo, 1962; Thurayyā Malḥas, Al-Qiyam al-Ruḥiyyah fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi, Beirut, n.d.

40. Op.cit., p.123.

41. Beirut, 1943.

42. These are many. Among them thereis S.Labaki's charming book on modern Lebanese poetry, Lubnān al-Shā'ir, Beirut, 1954; Iḥsan 'Abbās and M.Y. Najm's excellent study of the immigrant Arab poets in North America, Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi fi 'l-Mahjar, Beirut, 1957; Muḥammad Mandūr's study of modern Egyptian poetry, Al-Shi'r al-Miṣri ba'd Shauqi, in three volumes, Cairo, 1955-8; Nāṣir al-Dīn Asad's book on modern poetry in Palestine and Trans-Jordan Al-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth fī Filasṭīn wa 'l-Urdunn, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1961; Sāmi al-Dahhān's book on modern Syrian poetry, Al-Shi'r al-

Ḥadīth fi 'l-Iqlīm al-Sūri, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1960; Yūsuf 'Izziddīn's book on modern Iraqi poetry, mentioned above.

43. Outstanding among these is A. Ghaṭṭās Karam's book, Al-Ramziyyah fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi al-Ḥadīth, Beirut, 1949.

44. Op.cit., p.152.

45. Wellek, "Theory", p.187.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid., see also p.188.

49. Ibid., pp.187-8.

50. Achievements in American Poetry, 1900-1950, Chicago, 1951.

51. Wellek, "Theory", pp.188-91.

52. Wilson, op.cit., p.252.

53. Wellek, "Theory", p.189.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Wilson, loc.cit.

57. Ibid., pp.252-3.

58. Ibid., p.255.

59. Wellek, "Six Types of Literary History", p.112.

60. Such as Badawı al-Jabal, Ahmad al-Ṣāfi al-Najafi, Muḥammad Mahdi al-Jawāhiri, etc.

61. These constitute the majority of the poets examined.

62. Such as Aḥmad Zaki Abū Shādi and 'Abbās Maḥmūd al-'Aqqād in their capacity as poets.

63. Such as the poets of the conservative school of Damascus who will be discussed in a later chapter.

64. Wellek, "Theory", p.185.

65. "Periods and Movements in Literary History", English Institute Annual, 1940, p.88.

66. Wellek, "Theory", p.185.

67. Wellek, "Periods and Movements", p.74.

68. Ibid., pp.79-80.

69. Ibid., p.80.

70. Ibid., p.89.

71. Wilson, Axel's Castle, New York, 1942, p.11.

72. Ibid.

73. For further explanation of this see Wellek, "Periods and Movements", pp.88-101.

PART I: THE CULTURAL ROOTS OF CONTEMPORARY ARABIC POETRY

Before proceeding to describe contemporary Arabic poetry, it would be relevant to examine the cultural roots of this poetry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with a view to discovering to what extent the cultural traditions of these two centuries have influenced the development of Arabic poetry in this century. This introductory chapter is not meant to be an historical survey, but an attempt at tracing the remote influences that might have played a part in colouring the development and quality of contemporary Arabic poetry in the various Arab countries.

The poetic situation of recent times is subtly connected with the cultural situation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and with the cultural centres in the different Arab countries during that time. It is amazing to note the influence of accumulated culture on the growth of the poetic talent; for although one cannot exclude the possibility of an extraordinary talent springing up against an arid background, it does become clear to the observer that an accumulated cultural tradition enhances both the growth and the possibility of the discovery of talent, gets a quicker reaction and furnishes a richer background on which to build.

CHAPTER ONE : ARABIC CULTURE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In the eighteenth century there was a living Islamic educational tradition in Egypt, Iraq and Syria.[1] In Egypt, the supremacy of the college mosque of al-Azhar was established, the madrasas and colleges of Cairo becoming its satellites.[2] Iraq in the eighteenth century still had the active remnant of an old educational tradition (preserved with difficulty after the Mongul conquest)[3] in Baghdad, Mūsil and Baṣra,[4] as well as in the great Najaf and Karbalā' Shī'a colleges.[5] Indeed, the cultural tradition had never died in Iraq but was preserved from generation to generation, not only in the religious centres but, like other great centres of Arabic and Islamic learning, as a family heritage. Writing about the old public and private libraries in Iraq, Zaidān quotes Father Anisṭās al-Karmili, editor of Lughat al-'Arab magazine, as asserting the presence of a great number of important books hidden in the Iraqi libraries among which are many rare manuscripts preserved with jealous care in private libraries.[6]

The culture of both Egypt and Iraq was purely Islamic being divided in Iraq into Sunni and Shī'a elements with no cultural contacts between them.[7] In Syria, however, the cultural scope was not limited to an Islamic tradition of education. The eighteenth century saw the Arabic language becoming more and more established in the Church instead of the Syriac language[8] and witnessed the beginning of what is known as the Christian tradition in modern Arabic literature. This will be discussed shortly.

The centres of Islamic education in Syria were less centralized than those of Egypt, since in addition to the main centres of Damascus, Aleppo and Tripoli, there were provincial schools in Jerusalem and Nāblus and college mosques in all towns.[9] But Damascus and Aleppo were definitely the most important centres of Islamic culture in Syria, with no less than forty-five madrasas active in Damascus and probably nearly that number in Aleppo.[10]

The range of studies in the Islamic centres of education, as in most religious seminaries was narrow[11] and characterized by an attitude of complete submission to authority.[12] This limited scope naturally had a narrowing effect on the minds of the pupils, and education had sunk to the level of merely holding society by the inculcation of tradition.[13] One concludes from what Gibb and Bowen have written, that the culture of Egypt seems to have been the most centralized in the Arab world of the eighteenth century and the most conventional; for besides a strong centralisation of education around al-Azhar, the literary output seems to have been exclusively the work of Sheikhs,[14] whereas in Syria and to some extent in Iraq, the educated lay classes of clerks and secretaries took a prominent share in both poetry and belle-lettres.[15] Egypt, moreover, seems to have been able to remain self-contained and self-centred, while Syria was in close contact with Turkey and other Arab countries.[16] Cairo, because of the presence of al-Azhar, the great centre of Islamic Sunni studies in the Orient[17] to which students flocked from all parts of the Islamic world, was able to keep to this self-centred attitude in the sense that Egyptians did not find it necessary to seek knowledge anywhere outside their country. This might be the beginning of a trend in Egypt which has played a part in directing cultural relations between Egypt and other Arab countries throughout modern times. For this attitude was to remain a characteristic of Egyptian writers for a long time, allowing for some exceptions, and even now, despite the inevitability of a cultural fusion in the contemporary Arab world, a great deal of the critical and historical material produced in Egypt still carries to some extent the mark of being self-centred, as will be shown further during the course of this work.

The educational tradition in Syria was characterised by a greater spirit of adventure and openness, Syrian scholars being apparently more inclined than those of Egypt to travel outside their borders, many going to al-Azhar itself.[18] Reference is due here, too, to the Islamic Schools

of Istanbūl which must have had some influence in the provincial centres.

Syria, including Lebanon, had, in the eighteenth century, another cultural field which was to be cultivated to a great extent in the nineteenth century. This was the Christian literary current which started at Aleppo and spread to Lebanon. Aleppo was, in fact, both an Islamic as well as a Christian educational centre, and had produced during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries several men of letters, both Moslem and Christian,[19] thus retaining a sort of literary heritage. There were definite cultural contacts between Christians and Moslems. The Christians at Aleppo "set themselves to master the sciences of the Arabic language, acquiring them from the only group which possessed them at the time, the sheikhs of the Moslem religious hierarchy. Some of them wrote poetry and prose correctly and with love, and it was from them that the flame of Arabic literature was carried to Lebanon."[20] The literary tradition was fortified, moreover, by certain European influences particularly among the Arabic speaking Christians.[21] The relations between the Christian centres of Aleppo and those of Lebanon were established early. The cultural activity centred around the convents and religious seminaries as well as the many schools[22] dependent on them which numbered quite a few and were increasing steadily. For, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, the relations of Lebanon with Europe, politically and culturally, were already established.[23] Many of the Maronite Lebanese clergy were studying at the Maronite Seminary of Rome, some of whom rose to great eminence, and translated from Arabic a number of books in history, theology and literature.[24] Western languages, on the other hand, were being taught at the many schools founded in Lebanon "and it was men who had studied at these schools who acted as interpreters to the foreigner when he occupied Egypt."[25] As ʿAbbūd puts it, the Lebanese were messengers of culture between East and West.[26]

The greatest contribution to the Christian literary tradition in the eighteenth century was furnished by the Metropolitan Jirmānus Farḥāt (1670-1732), lexicographer, grammarian and poet. Farḥāt had received an

excellent education from the Christian and Moslem scholars at Aleppo.[27] He is famous as the first of the Arabised Syrians to achieve Classical purity in his style.[28] His poetry, however, was not free from grammatical errors and colloquialism.[29] He was a gifted man who would have done much more as a poet had he not had the extremely difficult task of being a pioneer in the field. His translation of Christian ideas into Arabic poetry, or as the Encyclopaedia of Islam puts it, "his effort to apply the forms of Arabic poetry to specifically Christian themes" was the beginning of a long tradition which is still alive in contemporary poetry.*

At the opening of the nineteenth century, there were two cultural currents, both emanating from religious centres,[31] blowing timidly along two axes: a Moslem axis connecting Cairo with Damascus and Aleppo, and not entirely out of touch with the cultural centres of Iraq (Sunni scholars never losing touch with Cairo, and the Shī'a with Shī'a scholars in Syria who travelled to the Shī'a centres in Iraq for their education);[32] and a Christian axis connecting Aleppo with the mountains of Lebanon. The nineteenth century, however, was to see many developments in the general situation as the modern literary Renaissance began.

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* To give a single instance his two verses describing his struggle against temptation which although not completely free from Ṣūfi influences, are more directly Christian in essence:

انى بليت باريـع لم يخلقـوا الا لشدة بلوتي وعنائـي
ابليس والدنيا ونفسي والهـوى كيف الخلاص وكلهم اعدائـي ؟

The verses read fresh and pleasant in Arabic. A Moslem poet would probably have written اين المفر (where can I run away?) instead of كيف الخلاص (how can I be saved?)

But even in so early an attempt, Farḥāt is not able to free himself of the ridiculous grasp of the Arab poetic tradition on the mind, although a good part of it should have been quite dead for him. A single example is his saying when he was appointed Metropolitan:

ارى احدا ،بل طور سينا ويذبلا ادقّ واخفى بل اخف شبيرها

where the reference to Uḥud, Yadhbul and Thabīr, mountains in Arabia, is ridiculous.[30]

Footnotes

1. F.A.R. Gibb & H. Bowen, Islamic Society and the West, London, 1957, Vol. I, ii, 154.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p.155.
4. Ibid., pp.155-6.
5. Ibid., p.156.
6. J. Zaidān, Tārīkh Ādāb al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah, Vol.IV, 140.
7. Gibb & Bowen, loc.cit.
8. M. 'Abbūd, Ruwwād an-Nahḍah al-Ḥadīthah, Beirut, 1952, p.31. 'Abbūd does not specify which church, but must be talking here of the Maronite Church because of his discussion of the achievement of Jirmānus Farḥāt, the Maronite Metropolitan who will be discussed shortly. However, the Maronite Liturgy is described by D. Attwater to be still in Syriac although "the lessons and some other prayers are in Arabic." See his book, The Christian Churches of the East, second printing, Milwaukee, 1948, Vol. I, 174. In fact, the Syriac language seems to be still much in use in several other churches in the Arab Middle East, see ibid., a chart of the Catholic Eastern Churches.
9. Gibb & Bowen, op.cit., p.155.
10. Ibid.; on Aleppo's importance as a literary centre see Anwar al-Jundi, Al-Adab al-'Arabi al-Ḥadīth fī Ma'rakat al-Muqāwamah wa 'l-Ḥurriyyah wa 'l-Tajammu', Cairo, 1960, pp.353-7.
11. Gibb & Bowen, op.cit., p.159; for a description of the narrow education at al-Azhar see S. Ḍaif, Al-Adab al-'Arabi al-Mu'āṣir fī Miṣr, second edition, Cairo, 1961, pp.19-20.
12. Gibb & Bowen, op.cit., p.139.
13. Ibid., p.160.
14. Ibid., p.164; Pierre Cachia, Ṭāha Ḥusayn, London, 1956, p.5.
15. Gibb & Bowen, loc.cit.
16. Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, p.32 gives some political and other reasons why central towns of Syria (and Iraq) had to be kept in closer contact with Turkey than was the case with Egypt.
17. Gibb & Bowen, op.cit., p.154; for a detailed account of al-Azhar's supremacy and prestige in Egypt see Muḥammad 'Abdullah 'Inān, Tārīkh al-Jāmi' al-Azhar, second edition, Cairo, 1958, especially pp.220-1, 222, 223, 227, and 228; see also B. Dodge, Al-Azhar, a Millennium of Muslim Learning, Washington, 1961.
18. Gibb & Bowen, loc.cit.
19. See Zaidān, op.cit., pp.11-2.
20. Hourani, op.cit., p.56.
21. Encyclopaedia of Islam under Djarmanus Farhat.
22. Hourani, loc.cit.; L. Cheikho, Al-Ādāb al-'Arabiyyah fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsi' 'Ashar, Beirut, 1908, Vol.I, 5-6.

23. B. Carāli, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ma'ni al-Thāni, Idāratuhu wa Siyāsatuhu, Ḥarīṣah, Lebanon, 1937, pp. 37-8, 41-2, 142-3, 146, & 154-5.

24. Hourani, op.cit., p.55; Cheikho, op.cit., p.13.

25. Mārūn 'Abbūd, Al-Ru'ūs, second edition, Beirut, 1959, pp.286-7.

26. Ibid., p.286.

27. E.I., loc.cit., Zaidān, op.cit., p.13.

28. 'Abbud, Ruwwād, p.29.

29. Ibid., p.31; E.I., loc.cit.

30. All verses taken from 'Abbūd, Ruwwād, pp.29-30; for more details on Farḥāt's Christian themes see E.I., loc.cit.

31. On these schools and their teachings of religious books see a quotation in A.K. al-Maqdisi, Ittijāhāt, p.205.

32. On the relationship of Syrian Shī'ahs with Shī'ah centres in Iraq see Gibb & Bowen, op.cit., p.156.

CHAPTER TWO : THE ARAB LITERARY RENAISSANCE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

SECTION 1 : THE PROSE REVIVAL

(i) Egypt

There is ample evidence that the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt (1789-91) was the beginning of the national renaissance of the country. The European occupation was an intellectual and social shock[1] which shook the rigidity and stagnation[2] of the eighteenth century society in Egypt. For despite the short period of the French stay there, they had made a great impact before they finally left, having stirred a considerable cultural activity during their stay.[3] Throughout the following rule of ambitious, extremely progressive Muḥammad ʿAli (who ruled from 1805-1849), a considerable political, industrial, military and cultural activity took place in Egypt,[4] an activity limited, however, by Muḥammad ʿAli's political and selfish ambitions[5] and lack of real appreciation of liberal values.[6] The cultural activity included the founding of the Būlāq printing press in 1822, the beginning of publication of the newspaper "Al-Waqāʾiʿ al-Miṣriyyah" in 1828, the eleven despatches of scholarship students sent to Europe over the years (from 1826-1847) and the founding of schools at home. Famous among these schools was the "School of Languages" (Madrasat al-Alsun) founded by Muḥammad ʿAli in 1836 on the advice of Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ al-Ṭahṭāwi (1801-1873) who became immediately its principal.[7] There was an active period of translation during the reign of Muḥammad ʿAli and later, during the reign of Ismāʿīl (1863-1879).[8] An authority on the subject, as Maqdisi calls him,[9] mentions, for example, as many as 243 books translated from European languages between 1822-42,[10] and published at the Būlāq printing press. Gibb mentions as many as two thousand translated into Arabic and Turkish by al-Ṭahṭāwi and his students.[11] All these branches of cultural activity helped to bring about a general re-awakening of minds. It would be superfluous and repetitive to go over the details of the

cultural revival in Egypt in the nineteenth century. The technical details of this revival are repeated over and over again as an introduction to most histories of the Arabic literary renaissance. The books written by Egyptian authors, moreover, tend mostly to overlook the immense cultural activity that took place in Syria and Lebanon in the nineteenth century, and the vital, basic and leading role played by the Syrio-Lebanese pioneer writers in the general re-awakening of the literary activity in the Arab world.[12]

This chapter, moreover, does not aim at an historical survey but only at an attempt to touch on the most outstanding contributions of the creative talent in nineteenth century Arabic literature in order to trace the aesthetic and cultural roots of the contemporary poetic situation. An attempt will be made, however, at following some relevant trends downstream through the consecutive literary generations with a view to explaining their importance in moulding the contemporary poetic scene.

The cultural activity in Egypt in the first half of the nineteenth century, vital as it was to Egypt and to the Arab world on the whole, has helped only to pave the way in Egypt for future literary contribution which began to bear fruit only towards the last decades of the century. Special mention is due here to Rifā'a Rāfi' al-Ṭahṭāwi who stands unique in his age.[13] He may well be regarded as the first enlightened sheikh of modern times in the Arab world. His book Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz Ilā Talkhīs Bārīz is not only an account of French life as the author witnessed it during the five years of his stay in Paris where he was acting as Imām to the first group of Egyptian students sent to Paris in 1826, but is also an important summary of Western liberal thought as it was manifested in France in the twenties and early thirties. He watched the three day successful revolution of 1830 and the deposition of King Charles X[14] and wrote a full description of the event.[15] Ṭahṭāwi was one of the most profound Arab minds to come into contact with Western liberal thought.[16] The ideas of

the French enlightenment left a permanent mark on him and through him on the Egyptians.[17] He is, moreover, undoubtedly the most famous, (and perhaps the first)[18] Egyptian of modern times to take upon himself the task of translation into Arabic from a European language.[19] As head of the "School of Languages" he was a teacher and guide to the first generation of Egyptian translators. He also edited al-Waqā'i' al-Miṣriyyah from 1842-1850[20] and aside from his numerous translated works (mostly on scientific subjects), he wrote several books.[21] But Ṭahṭāwi's original works, even his two most important books, Takhlīṣ and Manāhij al-Albāb al-Miṣriyyah Fī Manāhij al-Ādāb al-'Aṣriyyah (which embodies Ṭahṭāwi's views on Egypt's future, her nature and destiny, as well as a whole theory of politics) are not creative from a literary point of view. Al-Ṭahṭāwi, in fact, spent his whole life struggling with his medium, prose,[22] but could not achieve even at the end a style flexible enough to be able to set the model for other Egyptian prose writers. In most of his original literary writings, he was unable to get rid of the rhymed endings to sentences (saj') or at least of parallelisms, embellishments and rhetorical figures which characterised the prose of his time. It is not that he was unaware of the encumbrance this affected style had on the unexplored fields imposed on prose in the new age that was dawning on his part of the world. He managed to avoid it while writing on completely new topics, or while translating. Moreover, his attention had been drawn to this by watching the style of the French prose writers. Writing in Takhlīṣ about embellishments, he mentions that the French regard these as a sign of weakness not to be used but rarely and only in humorous writings.[23] Yet this does not impress him as the right attitude to adopt himself. One doubts, though, whether at such an early stage of prose development in Egypt, he would have been capable of taking a decisive attitude or successfully following a different procedure of writing in the extremely difficult art of prose. He had to yield to forces stronger than

himself: forces of an intrenched tradition inculcated in an Azhar student of peasant stock with no cultural background in his earlier life. His brilliance, his diligence and his depth of mind could not be enough. He was not at home when writing on completely new topics previously unadmitted and technically inadmissible to the prose style common to his age, and one can sense the extreme difficulty he had while translating from French or while writing about internal news in Al-Waqā'i' .[24] Instinctively, al-Ṭahṭāwi, confronted by a flood of new words and expressions which he had to translate into Arabic, did the only thing he could do: he used the colloquial word or Arabised the foreign. This natural and instinctive way of overcoming the difficulties and deficiencies of a language long divorced from modern contacts, was not destined, however, to become a tradition - the idea of the purity of the Classical language taking later on a strong hold on the minds of the Arabs, prompted by the rise of nationalism. Al-Ṭahṭawi's achievement should only be judged against his entire background and its possibilities. He was Egypt's first important journalist and his brave and persistent attempt to pave his way towards a greater clarity and simplicity of style and towards fulfilling a task which was vital and patriotic cannot fail to evoke admiration.[25] He was a pioneer in the field and his difficulties and shortcomings are not a proof against him but are rather a proof of the indispensable connection between form and content, especially when the form is elaborate and conditioned by rigid rules and a long usage, as was the case with the rhymed prose of his time. A time comes when the repetitive form carries with it its repetitive phrases and the whole content is narrowed to a limited sphere and is repeated over and over again. To break through such an empasse needs more than intelligence and goodwill; it needs time - time to experiment and explore all the possibilities, and then time to arrive at a new command of a re-adapted language and style. While the Syro-Lebanese writers were, by mid-century, already in perfect command of an older and

freer[26] experiment at modernising prose, Egyptian prose writers did not arrive at a modern sensibility except towards the end of the century.[27] This may have been due firstly to the kind of revival that took place in Egypt during the reign of Muḥammad 'Ali which laid stress on scientific studies and did not encourage literature or too much originality,[28] and secondly to the nature of the cultural heritage in Egypt, carried on from the eighteenth century: centralised around al-Azhar, narrow, self-contained and very conventional. It is perfectly true that there was a general cultural degeneration throughout the Arab world,[29] the literature suffering from a kind of introversion and living on its past.[30] But the cultural situation in Egypt had been narrower than that in Syria and Lebanon which were characterised by a relative openness towards outer cultural currents.[31] The learned Christians of Aleppo, where the Christian literary activity began, carried the flame of Arabic literature to Lebanon, and those in Lebanon "who wished to be officials studied Arabic avidly... and passed on what they had studied to their children. Whole families of men of letters grew up in this way, and it was from such families - Yāziji, Shidyāq, Bustāni, that there came in the early nineteenth century the founders of the literary renaissance of the Arabs."[32]

(ii) Syria and Lebanon

There is no doubt that the modern literary renaissance of the Arabs,[33] from the point of view of general creative contribution, started in Syria and Lebanon and not in Egypt, in prose rather than in poetry, and was first accomplished by Syrian and Lebanese authors.[34] The development of Arabic prose in the nineteenth century is a very interesting study of an art that was able to explore to the full its great possibilities in an atmosphere of relative freedom. We cannot go here into any details concerning this side of its development, but its evolution in the nineteenth century is relevant to this work from several points of view. Firstly, because on a comparative basis, it was the only literary

form that underwent a complete metamorphosis during the nineteenth century. Secondly, because a whole basis for the modern Arabic language was being laid in prose in the nineteenth century. This basis affected its diction and idiom and therefore affected poetry's diction and idiom. Thirdly, because some experiments in nineteenth century Arabic prose would lead to a re-examination of the possibilities of the poetic medium and would at a surprisingly early stage of the poetic development produce some first class literature of an original kind that would enrich not only the poetic form and content, but also the whole poetic sensibility of the following generations. This will be discussed in due course.

During the Arab literary renaissance in Lebanon, we see the first generation of Lebanese writers, those whom Mārūn 'Abbūd rightly called "The Pioneers" in his book of the same name,[35] were working simultaneously on several levels of creativity. Among them, three in particular did to Arabic prose the services it vitally needed to become a living and powerful medium of expression. These were Nāṣīf al-Yāziji (1800-1883), Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq (1801-1887), and Buṭrus al-Bustāni (1819-1883). The first two who were contemporaries, and literary rivals,[36] were working in two opposite spheres; their work proved vital and indispensable. Arabic prose in Lebanon at the beginning of the nineteenth century, aside from the fact that it shared the general features of Arabic prose everywhere, was suffering from two other shortcomings: firstly it had threatened to decline into "a pale reflexion of a culture [Western culture] foreign to its nature and traditions"[37] through the contacts which the educated in Lebanon had with the Western educational missionaries,[38] and secondly, it was burdened with a diction which lacked firm roots[39] as a result of the gradual and rather recent Arabisation of the Lebanon. The Classical Arabic language in the mountains of Lebanon had not yet had sufficient scope to become strongly rooted in the Lebanese literary tradition, as a result, no doubt, of its having grown gradually among the

people in an age of general literary and intellectual decline in the Arab world. It had not been given the opportunity, therefore, of producing any great work or works of literature in Arabic. No language can become really rooted in a people without the aid of good works of literature written in that language. It only becomes really theirs when it has been able to express their emotional and aesthetic experiences and reflect the inner state of their conciousness. The early translations of the Bible were weak and grammatically incorrect.[40] They had given a rather weak start to the Christian Arabs who gradually acquired a bad reputation as writers of Arabic.[41] In order to become strong and firmly rooted, the language in Lebanon had to link itself with important works in Classical Arabic, had to go back to tradition and relate itself completely to it as a sign of actual kinship, and this task needed a traditionalist to accomplish it. Nāṣīf al-Yāziji was the necessary traditionalist destined to fulfill this task. "He followed the footsteps of the old /Arab writers/ so closely that he was envied for his /assimilation/ of traditional ways."[42] Both a poet and a prose writer, his greatest service to the Arab literary revival was rendered in prose. His poetry was in the spirit of the affected poetical fashions of the day,[43] and although he admired al-Mutanabbi very greatly and memorised a great part of his poetry,[44] nevertheless, and contrary to what the E.I. says,[45] he could not in most of his poetry, overcome his immediate poetical tradition and forge a true link with the best examples of the Classical poetry. But in prose he was the first master of Arabic in Lebanon and his greatest concern was with language.[46] In his collection of sixty maqāmas entitled Majma' al-Baḥrain he was able to divorce himself from the Christian literary tradition both in style and thought[47] and to forge a link with al-Ḥarīri's style and diction,[48] rendering at once a double service of the utmost importance: firstly, a service towards a general revival of Arabic prose and diction,[49] and the service of creating a work of literature good enough to be able to

accomplish the task of rooting the Arabic language in Lebanon as a medium of culture and self-expression on an artistic level.

But traditionalism could not become a firmly established attitude in Lebanese nineteenth century prose. It was not rooted deeply enough and was too remote in time and spirit to grow on the Lebanese as a new experience, to penetrate permanently the depth of their sensibility. Prose does not carry the emotional and aesthetic weight of a national culture as does poetry. It is a more experimental vehicle of expression and the needs of the times force on it change and development more quickly. Among those early Lebanese prose writers there was a natural freshness and an adventurous spirit as well as an actual awareness of the times which would have made any attempt at a long stay within the boundaries of the old literary sensibility quite impossible. Al-Yāziji's attempt - instinctively sought because it was vitally needed - was possible because al-Yāziji had not had any Western education in his time.[50] The rest of the revivalists were all men who had come into direct contact with Western culture.[51] A direct link with modern life had to be forged and the two men most responsible for this achievement were Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq and Buṭrus al-Bustāni.

Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq was a great revivalist and reformist who had a deep sensitiveness to the needs of the age. Hourani does not think much of him as a political thinker, although he gives him great credit as an original writer. "There does not seem to be any sign of superior political insight in his writing nor of a consistent political doctrine."[52] This great writer, however, was an original mixture of nineteenth century modernism, the Arab cultural spirit and the Lebanese urge for adventure and incentiveness. The result was a rather erratic personality and a more erratic career.[53] His literary achievement, however, was great when measured against the background of his time. His explicit concern was first of all with language[54] and his mastery of it has been recognised

by all the writers on the subject,[55] a mastery surpassing that of his contemporaries, including al-Ṭahṭāwi, despite the latter's Azhar background.[56] One could say that al-Shidyāq had a constant adventure with the Arabic language which lasted all his life; for he never ceased exploring its possibilities, discovering its riches and exploiting all its resources. His style, though heavy at times for the modern reader, was varied and interesting, not lacking in sarcasm and abounding in wit and humour. There is no doubting its link with the best Classical Arabic prose. Only the fact of genius can explain how he could have achieved such a perfect linkage with a style long out of use, and such a sudden freedom from the unwholesome traditions of eighteenth century prose, talking at the same time on modern themes, introducing new ideas, comparing life wherever he went, bringing the culture of East and West face to face and roving freely between them without halting in breath or faltering in expression. His contemporaries, working simultaneously on one line or another of similar activity, never achieved his stylistic level. Buṭrus al-Bustāni who shared with al-Shidyāq his humanistic attitude and deep concern for both the Arab traditions and the European Enlightenment, as well as his immediate more liberal heritage, did not succeed in arriving anywhere near al-Shidyāq's powerful style. Mention is due here of al-Shidyāq's famous newspaper, Al-Jawā'ib which he published in Isṭanbūl from 1860. It was the first really important newspaper in the Arab world, "the first to circulate wherever Arabic was read, and to explain the issue of world politics."[57] In his Jawā'ib, in his books Al-Sāq ʿala al-Sāq Fīma Huwa al-Fariyāq, and Kashf al-Mukhabba', al-Shidyāq, besides his sometimes bitter attacks on society as a reformist repudiating its vile qualities, launched direct attacks on traditionalism in both poetry and prose, thus helping to pave the way to innovation which other writers and poets followed.[58]

Al-Bustāni's efforts to revive the language were in no way inferior

in their result, though the literary style was plain and unpolished. As Hourani puts it, half his life work was concentrated on reviving the knowledge and love of the Arabic language. "His Arabic dictionary, his Arabic encyclopaedia (Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif), the periodicals which he edited, all contributed to the creation of modern expository prose."[59] Language to him must be capable of expressing the concepts of modern thought simply, directly and precisely, without deviating from its true past in grammar and idiom.[60] Al-Bustāni was at the very heart of the movement of revivalism, surrounded by a circle of dilettantes and men of letters, all of them his pupils, and among them sons and relatives of his who became the second generation of writers and poets in the nineteenth century.[61]

It is clear that the early pioneers of the Arab literary renaissance excelled and experimented mainly in the field of prose. Their attempt at poetic creativity was limited and unsuccessful.[62] Al-Shidyāq's poetic contribution, for example, is inferior to his prose work and to his own ideas on poetry.[63] The same is true of al-Yāziji, despite the latter's superiority as a poet. This is perhaps a proof that poetry needs a longer time than prose to rid itself of any unwholesome traditions that had been infused in it over the years, even if attempts at revival should be made simultaneously. For the more rigid form of poetry (with its metres and rhythms, and in Arabic poetry its order of two hemistichs and the monorhyme) resists longer the attempts made at penetrating it, the unwholesome traditions becoming a part of the poetic art.[64] The very rhythm of the verses calls forth the appropriate meaning and shades of expression which had been repeated over and over again, and the whole work is done in a closed cell revolving around itself. Of course, the prose of the nineteenth century was suffering from a rigidity of form, but form in prose is always less rigid. Prose as a vehicle of everyday communication in a progressing country will have to find its way towards fulfilling its task. Change is imposed on it more quickly from sheer necessity. Moreover, poetry

embodies the aesthetic and emotional experiences of a people, experiences which are more private because they emanate from their own emotional reactions to things and from their inherent capacity for aesthetic appreciation.

The suggestion that poetry is more resistent to change than prose is supported by the history of Arabic poetry and prose in the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century which saw only a limited poetic adventure, saw a tremendous evolution of Arabic prose - a great and daring exploration into its possibilities, into the latent elasticity of words and phrases, modes and rhythms. From the Lebanese revivalists, we move to the second generation of Syro-Lebanese prose writers whose greatest representatives were 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibi (1849-1902),[65] Francis Marrāsh (1836-1873)[66] and Adīb Isḥāq (1858-1885).[67] These men have left a deep impact on the intellectual and revolutionary thought of the nineteenth century Arabic world.[68] They were men who had come into direct contact with Western liberal thought,[69] their temperament, moreover, was invariably revolutionary and uncompromising.

Adīb Isḥaq's style is regarded as a rare achievement in his age[70] and the best model for later generations of prose writers.[71] He ardently sought to revive the Classical style,[72] and a contemporary Arab, reading him now, cannot fail to recognise in the firm, well-proportioned and vigorous (often fiery) phrases the direct linkage with the healthier models of Classical prose.[73] Al-Kawākibi's style is almost modern, clear and vigorous and very strongly woven. The direct, intelligent and precise expression is an example of modernised Arabic prose based on the Moslem tradition in style, of which the Qurʾān is the strongest basis.[74] And although Gibb thinks along different lines,[75] the same description would apply to Adīb Isḥāq's style.

Francis Marrāsh's experiment, however, is the best fulfillment in nineteenth century prose of the Christian tradition in literature. He

is an original in the full meaning of the word. His Ghābat al-Ḥaqq is an allegorical vision of events happening in a dream world and revolving around the question of establishing freedom and civilisation. What is important in his thought for this work is the fantastic mixture of advanced European thought of his time (the benefits of peace, the importance of freedom and equality),[76] with his own personal concept of Christian belief in universal love[77] as well as his ardent concern with the modernising and liberating process in the Arab world which insisted on the love of country, but on a love free from religious considerations.[78]

In his writing a purely Christian element is liberated and subtly introduced into Arabic literature. It is not, as Ḥāwi says, the first creative expression of the Christian spirit in Arabic.[79] Jirmānus Farḥāt had already done that in the eighteenth century. Moreover, Marrāsh's contemporary and townsman, Rizq Allah Ḥassoun (1825-1880) was writing a good part of his poetry on purely Christian themes. His anthology, Ash'ar al-Shi'r, published in 1867, was a versification of Biblical stories from the Book of Job, the Song of Moses in the Exodus, the Song of Songs of Solomon, the Lamentations of Jeremiah the Prophet and others.[80] But Marrāsh's work was perhaps the first important literary work that blended Christian ideas and ideals with other ideas and ideals into a system of thought. It was not directly Christian in purpose, a fact which explains its influence on the following generations of nationally conscious people. From now on Christian ideas will leak slowly into Arabic literature and thought, merging all the time with Islamic attitudes.

The second important element in Marrāsh's writings is his style. It is true that it is not as sound nor as strongly woven as the style of either Adīb Isḥāq or al-Kawākibi, but at its best it is original, often romantic in tone, rising sometimes to poetic heights, declamatory, vivid, colourful and musical. It is the first example of poetic prose in modern Arabic literature. Ḥāwi has correctly established the influence of

Marrāsh's style on that of Gibrān.[81] There is no doubt that the poetic prose in modern Arabic literature is directly derived from the creativity of Christian Arab writers, a creativity emanating from the style of the Bible.

With these writers the link was completed with the modern Western thought of the Enlightenment, which was now directly introduced into modern Arabic thought, and stated over and over again in modern terms. The seeds of Western liberalism sown at this time were to give birth to the many revolutions and upheavals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They would, moreover, give rise to the long and vital conflict between contradictory ideas and situations that will be brought to life in the twentieth century Arab world as it stood open to the ideologies and doctrines advertised by the great centres of world politics.

In order to complete the picture of the prose revival in the nineteenth century, mention is due to the illustrious bunch of Syro-Lebanese prose writers and journalists who immigrated to Egypt during the reign of Ismā'īl and afterwards,[82] repelled by the coercive measures of the Ottoman authorities in Syria and Lebanon against free thought[83] and attracted by the relative liberty granted to writers and journalists in Egypt.[84] The many newspapers and magazines they founded,[85] set the example to the Egyptian journalists and press writers who were still struggling very hard to overcome the clumsiness of rhymed prose as they applied it to modern themes.[86] Ḥamzah, with objective fairness, established the link between the aspiring Egyptian reformers and journalists and the enlightened journalism of the Syro-Lebanese writers, and described the indebtedness of the former to the latter. "Popular journalism" he says, "is linked in Egypt with the presence of the Syrians here."[87] He quotes 'Abdallah Nadīm's newspaper, Al-Tā'if,[88] as saying that the Egyptians are indebted to these immigrant Syrians [in the field of journalism].[89] To Ḥamzah the participation of the Syrians in Egypt with so many cultural

activities, the meeting of the Syrian and Egyptian minds, were a great factor in the general revival of the country.[90]

There is no scope in this work for further discussion of the prose revival of the nineteenth century which, by the end of the century, was almost completely modernised. The movement of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghāni (1839-1897) and his famous pupil Muḥammad 'Abdu (1849-1905), their immense influence on Arab Islamic thought and on the movement of liberation have a direct bearing on the purpose of this work only as a part of the general intellectual and spiritual revival of the nineteenth century. Muḥammmad 'Abdu, despite his personal concern with the renovation of the Arabic language (he included its revival in his programme)[91] "did not produce any literary work - but this is not a cause for denying the important role he played; for as a result of his efforts the Moslems decided to adopt the attitude of change and innovation, and the power of the literary movement increased little by little, influencing the majority of Egyptians."[92] Muḥammad 'Abdu had opened the minds to a new self-awareness, and thus returned to them a self-confidence which might have suffered a shock as the fact of Western civilisation and its superiority dawned on them. He, "more than any other single man gave modern Egyptian thought a centre of gravity, and created, in place of a mass of disconnected writings, a literature inspired by definite ideals of progress within an Islamic framework."[93]

This work will be concerned from now on with the development of poetry and will be interested only in those prose writers who have had a marked influence on the development of poetry either as critics or as creative writers helping to establish a trend or mould a sensibility.

Footnotes

1. Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, p.54.
2. Ra'īf al-Khouri, Al-Fikr al-ʿArabi 'l-Ḥadīth, p.30.
3. Hourani, op.cit., p.51.
4. Ibid., pp.51-4; Ḍaif, Al-Adab al-ʿArabi 'l-Muʿāṣir fī Miṣr, p.22.
5. Hourani, op.cit., p.53.
6. Cachia, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, p.7.
7. For more details on the work of this school see A. Ḥamzah, Adab al-Maqālah al-Ṣuḥufiyyah fī Miṣr, Cairo, 1950, Vol.I, 70-2 & 100; 'Umar al-Dusūqi, Fi 'l-Adab al-Ḥadīth, Cairo, 1948, Vol.I, 23-4; Zaidān, Tarikh, Vol.IV, 186-7.
8. Maqdisi, Ittijāhāt, p.369; see also Dusūqi, Nash'at al-Nathr al-Ḥadīth wa Taṭuwwuruhu, Cairo, 1961, Vol.I, 3, where he mentions as many as a thousand books translated by Ṭahṭāwi and his pupils at the School of Languages; see also ibid., pp.5-6 for the activity of translators during the reign of Ismaʿīl.
9. Loc.cit.
10. Ibid.
11. "Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature, I, The Nineteenth Century", B.S.O.A.S., 1926-1928, IV, iv, 748.
12. For a single example see Dusūqi's two books mentioned above.
13. Ḥamzah, op.cit., p.241; Dusūqi, Nash'at al-Nathr, pp.28 & 34.
14. Khouri, op.cit., pp.30-1; J. al-Shayyāl, Rifāʿah Rāfiʿ al-Ṭahṭāwi, Cairo, 1958, p.55.
15. See his book, Takhlīṣ al-Ibrīz ilā Talkhīṣ Bārīz, Cairo, 1905, pp.199-21.
16. Khouri, loc.cit.
17. Hourani, op.cit., p.69; for a summary of his ideas see ibid., pp.72-83.
18. Ḥamzah, op.cit., p.109.
19. Maqdisi, loc.cit.; Cheikho, op.cit., Vol.II, 3.
20. Ḥamzah, op.cit., pp.123-4.
21. Ḥamzah, quoting from manuscript No.1026 in Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, says that his books number seventeen, aside from his translations; ibid., p.113 & n
22. See ibid., p.156; Dusūqi, Nash'at al-Nathr, pp.27-8; both writers describe his struggle with language and style.
23. Pp.67-3.
24. Examples of these are numerous in Al-Waqāʿi'; for some of these see Ḥamzah, op.cit., pp.128-9 & 129-31; see also his book Takhliṣ, for a studious example of his early translation of the French Charter.
25. For a fuller description of his style see Dusūqi, Nash' at al-Nathr, pp.27-8, 29, 33, 35 & 36.
26. On the subject of freer cultural heritage in Syria and Lebanon, see I. Adham, "Khalīl Muṭrān, Shāʿir al-ʿArabiyyah 'l-Ibdāʿi", Al-Muqtaṭaf, April, 1939, Vol.94, iv, 411-8; Gibb, op.cit., pp.752-3.

27. For an example of this see Dusūqi's description of the development of the style of ʿAbdullah al-Nadīm, Nashʾat al-Nathr, pp.87-93.

28. Hamzah, op.cit., p.216; Ḍaif, op.cit., p.23; Dusūqi, Fi 'l-Adab al-Ḥadīth, Vol.1, 49.

29. Maqdisi, Ittijāhāt, p.209.

30. Gibb & Bowen, op.cit., p.163.

31. For a further description of the openness of Syria and Lebanon to the West, see I. Adham, "Khalīl Mutrān, Shāʿir al-ʿArabiyyah 'l-Ibdāʿi", Al-Muqtaṭaf, February, 1939, Vol.94, ii, 164, and March, 1939, Vol.94, iii, 302-3.

32. Hourani, op.cit., p.56.

33. Gibb, "Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature, I, The Nineteenth Century", pp.748 and 752, speaks particularly of the early Western cultural influences on Syria and Lebanon.

34. On the precedence of Syrian men of letters see Ilyās Abū Shabakah Rawābiṭ al-Fikr wa 'l-Rūḥ baina al-ʿArab wa 'l-Firanjah, second revised edition, Beirut, 1945, p.79.

35. In his book Ruwwād al-Nahḍah al-Ḥadīthah.

36. ʿAbbūd, Ruʾūs, p.288.

37. Gibb, "Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature, I, The Nineteenth Century", p.750.

38. Ibid., p.748; see also his book, Arabic Literature, an Introduction, second edition, Oxford, 1963, p.160.

39. On the early "rootless diction" in Lebanon see Khalīl Hāwi, Gibran Khalil Gibran, his Background, Character and Works, Beirut, 1963, p.38.

40. For more on the weakness of the Lebanese writers in Classical Arabic see ʿAbbūd, Ruwwād, pp.29 & 31; B. al-Bustāni, Udabaʾ al-ʿArab fi 'l-Andalus wa ʿAṣr al-Inbiʿāth, third edition, Beirut, [1937?] pp.133-4.

41. See ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Rashūdi's essay, "Muṭāraḥāt Adabiyyah baina Shuʿarāʾ al-ʿIrāq wa Shuʿarāʾ Lubnān fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ ʿAshar", Al-Maʿārif magazine, Beirut, June and July number, 1963, p.43, where he quotes a poem by the Iraqi poet al-Sheikh Ṣāliḥ al-Tamīmi, in which he excuses himself to the Wāli Daud Pasha from answering a poem by the Christian poet Buṭrus Karāmah, which Daud Pasha had asked him to answer in verse:

عهدتماك تعفو عن مسيء تعذرا الا فاعفنا من رد شعر تنصرا
وهل من مسيحي فصيح تصده اذا ابنم الشعر الفصيح وانكسرا

Karāmah had written his poem in praise of Daud Pasha.

42. ʿAbbūd, Ruʾūs, loc.cit.

43. See J. Zaidān, Tarājim Mashāhīr al-Sharq fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ ʿAshar, Cairo, 1903, Vol.II, 14-6; Cheikho, op.cit., for scattered examples of his poetry.

44. E.I. under Al-Yāzidji; Zaidān, Mashāhīr, p.14; both sources add that he memorised the Quran as well.

45. **Loc.cit.**

46. Hourani, op.cit., p.95.

47. E.I., loc.cit.

48. His imitation of Ḥariri's style of rhymed sentences decked with embellishments was not completely foreign to his immediate tradition in prose; but he was able to arrive at Classical freshness and the strongly woven sentences of the Classical style accomplishing immediate divorce from the seediness and hollowness of meaning of his contemporary prose.

49. Zaidān, Tārīkh, Vol.IV, 260 mentions that his work enjoyed great respectability, "for there was no man of letters in Syria who did not memorise a poem or maqāmah by him all through the century"; see also E.I. loc.cit.

50. E.I., loc.cit.; for more on the life of al-Yāziji, see Kamāl al-Yāziji, Ruwwād al-Nahḍah al-Adabiyyah fī Lubnān al-Ḥadīth, 1800-1900, Beirut, 1962, pp.82-90.

51. On the relations of the Lebanese revivalists with Europe see Hourani, op.cit., p.95.

52. Ibid., p.98.

53. For a full account of his life see 'Abbūd, Ṣaqr Lubnān, Beirut, 1950; M. Ṣawāyā, Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq, Beirut, 1962; Muḥammad Aḥmad Khalaf al-Allah, Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq wa Ārā'uhu 'l-Lughawiyyah wa 'l-Adabiyyah, Cairo, 1955; K. al-Yāziji, op.cit., pp.95-106.

54. Hourani, loc.cit.

55. See 'Abbūd, Ruwwād, pp.156-60; Mujaddidūn wa Mujtarrūn, Beirut, 1948, pp.71 & 201; Ru'ūs, pp.284 & 289; Ṣaqr, pp.162-7, 201-7; see also Zaidān, Mashāhīr, pp.88-9; Tārīkh, Vol.IV, 262; A. Ḥamzah, op.cit., pp.222 & 227 etc.

56. This is, however, ambivalent; for al-Azhar's narrow traditionalism could have been a further hindrance to development, despite the strong linguistic background it gives its students.

57. Hourani, loc.cit.

58. 'Abbūd, Mujaddidūn, p.201.

59. Hourani, op.cit., pp.99-100; for a fuller account on his ideas on literature and language see Khalaf Allah, op.cit., pp.92-142 & 156-88.

60. Hourani, op.cit., p.100.

61. For more on him see K. al-Yāziji, op.cit., pp.90-5.

62. 'Abbūd, Ruwwād, p.140.

63. See Khalaf Allah, op.cit., pp.180-8; 'Abbūd, Ṣaqr, p.113; Ṣawāyā, op.cit., p.128; see also selections from his poetry in Kanz al-Raghā'ib fī Muntakhabāt al-Jawā'ib, first edition, Istanbul, 1291, A.H., Vol.III.

64. When al-Yāziji attempted to be original, he invented another example of the "exercise of wits" which was the essence of the poetic activity of his days. His 'Ātil al-'Ātil is a genre of verse where all the words are without any dots and all the words employed in spelling them are also without any dots. He had some other similar tricks of virtuosity, see Zaidān, Mashāhīr, p.16.

65. On al-Kawākibi, see Sāmi al-Kayyāli, Al-Ḥarakah al-Adabiyyah fī Ḥalab, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1957, pp.89-112; also Maqdisi, Ittijāhāt, pp.109-10; Sāmi al-Dahhān, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kawākibi, Silsilat Nawābigh al-Fikr al-'Arabi, Cairo, n.d.; M.A. Khalaf Allah, Al-Kawākibi, Ḥayātuhu wa Ārā'uhu, Cairo, n.d.; Khaldūn Ḥuṣari, Three Reformers, a Study in Modern Arabic Thought, Beirut, 1966, pp.55-112.

66. On him see Ḥāwi, op.cit., pp.58-62.

67. Ibid., pp.52-7; Maqdisi, op.cit., pp.111-2.

68. As one may conclude from the assessment of writers such as Khouri, op.cit., pp.105-8.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid., p.106; ʿAbbūd, Ruwwād, p.187. On his style and influence see ibid., p.195.

71. Ibid.; Zaidān, Mashāhīr, p.77; Ḥāwi, op.cit., p.56.

72. Ibid., p.57.

73. For examples of his style see his book Al-Durar, Beirut, 1909. See also Khouri, op.cit., pp.215-23.

74. For examples of his style see his two books Tabāʾiʿ al-Istibdād, Cairo, n.d., and Ummu ʾl-Qurā, n.p., n.d.; see also Khouri, op.cit., pp.204-14 for examples of his style.

75. In his essay, "Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature, I, The Nineteenth Century", B.S.O.A.S., 1926-1928, IV, iv, 755, he says that Isḥāq created a style based on French rather than Arabic models. There might be some French influences manifested in the directness, simplicity and freedom from affectations of Ishāq's style, but the vigour and strength are definitely of Arab origin. Artistically speaking, one doubts whether it would have been possible to create a vigorous Arabic style in the nineteenth century based on purely foreign models.

76. Hourani, op.cit., p.247.

77. Ḥāwi, op.cit., p.60.

78. Hourani, loc.cit.

79. Op.cit., p.59.

80. See S. Kayyāli, Al-Adab al-ʿArabi ʾl-Muʿāṣir fī Sūriyyah, Cairo, 1959, p.51; for more details on Ḥassoun see also Kayyāli, Al-Ḥarakah al-Adabiyyah, pp.29-51.

81. Ḥāwi, op.cit., pp.61, 251, 252, 270, 273.

82. Zaidān, Tārīkh, IV, 65, 67 & 68.

83. Ḥamzah, op.cit., p.27; Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.11; U. Dusūqi, Fi ʾl-Adab al-Ḥadīth, I, 63.

84. On the encouragement of authorities in Egypt to journalism, see Zaidān, Tārīkh, IV, 67 and 68; Gibb, loc.cit.

85. Among which are al-Ahrām, founded by Salīm and Bishārah Taqla, 1876; Al-Mahrūsah, founded by Adīb Isḥāq and Salīm al-Naqqāsh, 1880; Al-Muqtaṭaf founded by Yaʿqūb Ṣarrūf in 1885; Al-Muqaṭṭam by the owners of Al-Muqtaṭaf in 1888; Al-Hilāl, by Jurji Zaidān in 1892.

86. The example of Muḥammad ʿAbduh is interesting. He kept to the traditional style of his age (rhymed prose and parallelism) until he had to edit Al-Waqāʾiʿ in 1880 when he had to modernise and simplify his style. See an example of his rhymed prose in 1876 in Ḍaif, op.cit., p.223.

87. Op.cit., p.26; see also I. Krachkovsky, "Fi ʾl-Adab al-ʿArabi ʾl-Ḥadīth", Al-Risālah, No.170, 5th October, 1936, p.1627.

88. The 21st November, 1882, number.

89. Ḥamzah, op.cit., p.28.

90. Ibid., p.74; on the predominance of Syrian journalism see Hourani, op.cit., p.97.

91. E.I. under his name.

92. Krachkovsky, op.cit., Al-Risālah, No.171, 12th October, 1936, p.1667.

93. Gibb, op.cit., p.758.

SECTION 2: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARABIC POETRY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Arabic poetry in the major part of the nineteenth century was benighted in every meaning of the word.[1] It had sunk to a genre of expression mainly concerned with amusement and politesse. Even elegy which has always remained a constant theme in Arabic poetry, had become a formal structure of repetitive phrases and laments. Embellishments (badī', jinās, ṭibāq, etc.), formal exercises of takhmīs and tashṭīr, the art of badī'iyyāt, of taṭrīz, ta'rīkh, tarāsul and several other genres of versification made of poetry a craftsmanship rather than an art.* It was an exercise of the wits that revolved around itself in a vacuum. The conception of the general public on poetry was that it was a choice of words and a capacity for outshining other poets and beating them at the game of musājalah. Humour, quick wittedness, a cleverness in introducing a new original shade of meaning and wit, were the most important qualities that made a good poet.[5]

Poetry was therefore artificial, imitative and sham.[6] It bore no relation to the best examples of the Classical poetry. Its relationship to the intellectual and stylistic adventures going on in prose was very superficial. There seems to have been no significant rapport between the

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* The badī'iyyāt were poems written in praise of the Prophet in the basīṭ metre, each verse containing a kind of badī', the poet often mentioning its name in the verse itself. This originated in Burdat al-Bauṣīri in praise of the Prophet and was imitated later by other poets. Perhaps al-Bārudi, then Shauqi, were the last to write this kind of poetry which killed the spirit of originality.[2]

Taṭrīz is another artificial sort of skilful versification. The poet, praising someone, uses the letters of his name, each letter at the beginning of the first or second hemistich , until he uses them all.

In ta'rīkh, letters that denote numbers are formed into words to fit a verse or a hemistich coming right after the word 'arrakha' or one of its derivatives. The numbers indicated by the letters point to a special date (birth, death, wedding, etc.). This genre was used to a great extent all over the Arab world and is not yet completely out of use.[3]

In tarāsul, poets exchanged poems of praise usually in the same metre and rhyme. This very common genre was used among poets all over the Arab world. Some of these exchanges were argumentative musājalāt .[4]

poetic scene of the times and the enlightenment that was spreading itself over the century. Even the great Shidyāq could not, as we have already seen, pass the hard test of producing a real change in poetry. In this, he was not helped much by his apparent sensitiveness to the faults of Arabic poetry in his time. In his long introduction to his anthology entitled Al-Maghna Li Kulli Ma'nā which is perhaps the first introduction to an anthology written by an Arab poet,[7] he wrote that words in poetry should be appropriate to the meaning, and that poetry should be simple, harmonious, unpedantic and unaffected.[8] Yet he was drawn to write panegyric poetry according to tradition,[9] admitting that he had the poet's greed to "adorn his anthology with panegyrics saying وقال يمدح الأمير ".[10] These poems are of a most affected style, empty of spirit and lacking in sincerity.[11]

(i) Iraq

There is no doubt that such weaknesses were found in Arabic poetry all over the Arab world. Artificiality and shamness remained dominant in the main centres of culture in the Arab world. The Arab poetic revival has been attributed to Maḥmūd Sāmi al-Bārūdi (1838-1904) of Egypt who rose to fame in the second half of the nineteenth century. Al-Bārūdi is the greatest Arab poet of the nineteenth century and the poetic revival of Egypt and Syria was accomplished mainly through his own achievement as will be discussed shortly. However, there was another poetic field, Iraq, which was slowly accomplishing a partial poetic revival even before al-Bārūdi's time, a revival which stemmed from indigenous forces in Iraq itself.

Iraq was isolated from constant contacts with the outer world[12] and was the Arab country in the nineteenth century least affected by the West among its progressive neighbours.[13] However, a living poetic tradition had persisted there, although a good part of nineteenth century poetry in Iraq did suffer from the same maladies and embellishments which reflected

the emptiness of men's life.[14] But despite the eulogies of Walis[15] some of which overflowed with humility[16] or at least with uncritical praise,[17] and despite the fascination with form and the play of words, etc., a current of strength and vitality was flowing which most writers on the subject have underestimated. The nineteenth century poetry in Iraq should be most interesting for the scholar who wants to place his finger on the roots of strength and supremacy in the Iraqi poetry of the mid-twentieth century. The energy of the recent Iraqi poetic experiment has its roots in this pure poetic tradition which has flown persistently in Iraq during the nineteenth century.[18]

Few literary historians have attempted a true, early estimation of the nineteenth century poetry in Iraq. Several studies have been made recently, but none of them was able to establish the importance of this poetry and to introduce it to the Arab reader with force.[19] And while the achievements of al-Bārūdi and of Ismā'īl Ṣabri in Egypt, and of Ibrāhīm al-Yāziji and Sulaimān al-Bustāni in Lebanon and others of their generation were fully advertised and accepted as basic in the development of modern Arabic poetry, the nineteenth century Iraqi contribution has never really taken its place in the history of this development.[20]

The authentic current in Iraqi poetry in the nineteenth century was based mostly, but not in all cases, on what may be vaguely called "the rebellious political theme". This genre of nineteenth century political poetry in Iraq is the finest example in modern Arabic of a poetry revived by the imposition of external social and political factors and the adoption of a theme answering to them. This was possible because the Classical poetic tradition in Iraq had been kept alive from generation to generation, preserved in the college mosques of the Islamic centres[21] where a living poetic tradition was very active. All the nineteenth century Iraqi poets seem to have been students of these religious institutions. These institutions were to be found in all the main cities and towns of Iraq,

particularly Baghdad, Mūṣil, Baṣrah, al-Ḥillah, Karbalā' and last but not least, al-Najaf.[22] There seems to have been a great freedom of cultural exchange within them, inspired perhaps by natural Iraqi creativity. Zaki Mubārak who lived in Iraq for about one year at the end of the thirties of this century observed the lingering tradition of competition between Sunni and Shī'ah centres of learning and the literary controversies that took place between them.[23] The vitality of the cultural tradition in Iraq explains the easy shift to a more modern kind of poetry which the nineteenth century Iraqi poets were able to make when they had to resort to a new theme. A directness and simplicity of considerable significance proved to be at the command of these poets.

Iraq in the nineteenth century suffered from extremely bad social and political conditions.[24] The Ottoman administration was bad and a great deal of foul play, oppression, espionage, looting, bribery and other forms of corruption prevailed.[25] The society was non-homogeneous and abounded with deep contradictions. It was made up of Turks, Kurds, Persians and old Assyriacs in addition to its Arab population.[26] The urban population which suffered from poverty was outnumbered by a tribal population in constant restiveness.[27] The tribes were both Kurdish and Bedouin Arabs who never conformed to the laws. Rough, proud and irreligious, they wreaked havoc in their many rebellions against the government, and in their inter-tribal wars.[28] The lives of the feudal land-owners made a fantastic contrast with the prevailing poverty of the peasants and simple townsmen,[29] and not only many races and social structures prevailed, but also many religions and sects.[30]

One is naturally led to believe that such social and political conditions are not conducive to the blossoming of literature. Egypt needed a European invasion and an enlightened and ambitious Muḥammad 'Ali to start a renaissance, while Syria needed the activity of a restive Christian community and the cultural influence of many Western missionary schools to

call forth its creative and intellectual impulse. But Iraq had none of these, so that one is brought to the conclusion that Iraq had no literary renaissance in the nineteenth century. This is partly true since by renaissance we mean a full revival of literary and intellectual activity in which all the possible kinds of learning are introduced, and the whole trend of intellectual thought aspires to a modern standard.

But if the Iraqi renaissance as a full cultural movement was belated, a part of the nineteenth century poetry was alive and thriving. It has been explained above how poetry was preserved in the religious madrasas. Another element to consider here is the fact that poetry in Iraq is almost a way of life,[31] and is "the most important expression of the Iraqi personality".[32]

The Shi'ah element also seems to have played a part in keeping alive the surge of virile poetry in Iraq. The main Shi'ah cultural centre,[33] al-Najaf al-Ashraf, was also one of the most important centres of Arab-Islamic culture,[34] in which many a valuable manuscript was kept.[35] Most of its population was poor.[36] It also suffered from roughness of life and the extreme severity of a desert climate.[37] But in spite of this, it had great cultural dignity. Together with other Shi'ah centres, it retained a Bedouin spirit which showed itself in the diction and structure of poetry,[38] although Bedouin influences in Iraq were by no means limited to Shi'ah centres for we see their effect on some later Sunni poets like al-Raṣāfi, as will be explained. However, they were at their strongest in these Shi'ah centres which had also developed certain poetic traditions that flourished in their forums of poetry, their private salons,[39] and the courtyards of their mosques. Many of these traditions were observed during the seasonal celebrations and solemnities commemorating the tragic death of al-Ḥusain, the Grandson of the Prophet.[40] Al-Najaf can boast of more poets than any other Iraqi town[41] with the exception of al-Ḥillah, and in fact the two of them seem to have produced more poets than the rest of Iraq.[42]

Poetry seems to have been a daily preoccupation in al-Najaf,[43] alternating between wit and humour on the one hand, and elegiac verse on the other.[44] Poetry competitions were encouraged.[45]

The centre of poetical life,[46] al-Najaf was also at the heart of the political strife and restiveness.[47] The Shi'ahs seem to have been unfavoured by the Sunni Turks who annoyed them in their faith and lives.[48] Their beliefs as to who should be Imam of the Moslems and their ideas on the Caliphate brought upon them many troubles from the Ottomans.[49] This gave cause for resurgence and hence for a political theme that mixed itself with religious poetry and the elegies of al-Ḥusain which sometimes expressed great spiritual rebellion. Indeed the elegies would have become completely stereotyped with repetitiveness had not the political and social theme introduced a new vigour and emotional veracity into them.

Another cause for the upsurge of dissenting political poetry in the nineteenth century was the Wahhābi movement. Although religiously inspired, the anti-Wahhābi poetry was tinted with a political colour.[50] This early example of a Shī'ah poet called Haj Hāshim al-Ka'bi, who died in 1817 shows a very early capacity of writing simple moving verse:[51]

ان صحّ ان ولاء آل محمـــــــــد ... وهواهم قد كان شركا اعظمـــــــــا
ان صحّ ان الواصلـــين نبيهـــــم ... في آله يستوجبـــون جهنمـــــــــا
ان صحّ ان المسلمين باسرهـــــم ... ما فيهم لله من يحمي الحمـــــى
ان صحّ لا خلفاء بعد نبيهـــــم ... او لا ائمة حرموا ما حرمـــــــــا
بل كلهم باغ مضلّ مبـــــــــدع ... الا سعود فنوره يجلو العمـــــى

The whole poem is on this level of simplicity and is charged with genuine emotion.

It should not be understood, however, that it was only the Shi'ah who harboured a grudge against the Turks. The whole Arab population was exposed to the Turkish misrule, although the Shi'ahs of Iraq were more in disfavour. In fact, two of the most important political poets of the period, 'Abd al-Ghani 'l-Jamīl (1780-1863) and 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Akhras

(1805-1875) were Sunni. The Turkish oppression was able to stir to anger many poets of both sects in Iraq.[52] The poetry which resulted from this is perhaps the beginning of the poetry of protest in Arabic in modern times. Its simplicity and directness, its powerful spirit and diction and its emotional veracity are often admirable. The poetic art in Iraq seems to have been understood by some poets as requiring simplicity and clarity. Verses by Ṣaliḥ al-Tamīmi, criticising the artificiality of the Lebanese poet Buṭrus Karāmah and his decorative verse read thus:

53

ولست ارى المصنوع الا مؤمّـــرا كما لا ارى المطبوع الا مؤمّـــرا
وما الشعر الا ما ابانت صـــدوره قوافيه لا ما السمع فيه تحيـــرا

Al-Akhras and al-Jamīl have many examples which show authenticity and a powerful grasp on the poetic language. Such verses by al-Jamīl whose poetry reflects more than that of any other contemporaneous poet in Iraq the troubled times of his country,[54] are significant:

55

وكم لي على الدّرخ من وقفـــة تسيل دموعي بها كالديـــم
اسائل اين الرفـاق الكـــرام واين الاعزة اهل الكـــرم
فلم ار لي من مجيب بهـــا وانّى تجيب العظـام الرمـــم

This is a meaning which was to be repeated often in the national poetry in this century. Early reference to Arab glory appears in his poetry:

56

متى يلثم اللبات رمحي وترتـــوى سيوف باعناق اللئام صليلهـــا
وحولي رجال من معدّ ويعـــرب مصاليت للحرب العوان قبولهـــا

The following example from al-Akhras illustrates further the strength and simplicity of this early poetry:

57

واتخـذ البيـد القفار اخلـــة اذا ما جفاني صاحب وخليـــل
ويصحبني في مثلها صارم بـــه كخصرك يا ذات الوشاح نحـــول
الى حيث لا يشقى النزيل بجـــاره ولا الدهر يعدو بالاذى ويصـــول
واترك دار الهون مأوى لمعشـــر عزيزهم في النائبات ذليـــل
وما عن قلى اجفو العراق واهلـه ولكن روضي في العراق محيـــل
ولو كنت ممن يشرب الماء بالقـــذى رويت وفي رى الذليل غليـــل

Al-Akhras is a very interesting poet and shows remarkable poetic gifts. The following poem on wine, women and play, shows great vitality, originality and grace, is well-contained and possesses organic unity, a most rare achievement in his time:

53 اقول لصاحبي ورضيع كأسي — رفيقي بالفسوق وبالفجور
علام صددت عن كأس الحميا — لقد ضيعت اوقات السرور
ابعد الشيب ويحك تبت عنها — وما لك في متابك من عذير
وكيف عدلت عن حالات سوء — تصير بها الى بئس المصير
لبست بها واياك المخازى — فاسحب ذيل مختال فخور
اننسى كيف قضّينا زمانا — به الايام باسمة الثغور
وكنا كلما بتنا سكارى — ورحنا بالمدام بلا شعور
وقمنا بعد ذلك واصطبحنا — فما ندرى المساء من البكور
وانت مع المواهر والزواني — تطاعنهن بالرمح القصير
وكنت تقول لي اشرب هنيئا — وخذها بالكبير وبالصغير
وكنت اذا نظرت ولو عجوزا — سللت سلول غرمول الحمير

Men who were in the public eye, such as poets for example, lived in the nineteenth century in the world of men. Their poetry was dedicated to serve the communal spirit which infused even the love poetry with a sort of uniform reaction. Such a way of life was never strictly private and gave little chance for the strictly private voice in poetry. This is why an authentically personal expression of a true experience as is shown in the above quoted poem as well as in the best poems of al-Akhras,[59] is a proof of the poet's originality and independence. This does not mean that one does not perceive the unnecessary mistakes in al-Akhras's poetry, but the general value of such poems remains artistically great because the poet successfully broke away in them from the humdrum and the conventional.

'Izziddīn did not perceive the artistic importance of al-Akhras's poetry, but criticised its immorality.[60] However, another short example of poetry on the same theme of love, wine and play which 'Izziddīn himself quotes shows the difference between al-Akhras's poems and those more

representative of traditional, nineteenth century poetry:

غنّى النديم فارقص الحبب ... وتصفّقت اكوابه طربا
قمر وشمس عقاره ازدوجت ... بالماء حتى انتجت شهبا
رقّت كرقته سلافته ... فكأنه في كأسه انسكبا [61]

The particular genius of al-Akhras, his spontaneous love of life, the mischievous streak which appears when his private voice is heard, the fluency of his style, the authentic tone, appear at the beginning of some of the traditional eulogies he writes, although he remains at his best in his strictly personal poetry. In these love overtures to his eulogies, the poet begins in traditional manner but seems to get carried away by his true emotions out of all proportion with the original theme of the poem. When he finally proceeds to praise his dignitary he does that suddenly and rather clumsily, committing a breach of the condition of husn al-takhallus in ʿāmūd al-shiʿr. The modern critic can perceive in this, however, the unconscious struggle of the poetic art to free itself from obsolete conventions at the hands of its talented bards.[62]

The most important poets of the nineteenth century beside al-Akhras and al-Jamīl are Ḥaidar al-Ḥilli (1830-1886),[63] Ṣālih al-Tamīmi (1762-1845),[64] ʿAbd al-Bāqi ʾl-ʿUmari (1789-1860)[65] and Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Ḥabbūbi (1849-1916). Towards the end of the century, when the Egyptian and Syrian periodicals started to arrive regularly in Iraq, a final departure from all decorativeness and embellishments was quickly effected.[66] This is seen by ʿIzziddīn to have happened often in the poetry of the same poets.[67] Yet despite this observation ʿIzziddīn does not try to investigate the artistic causes behind the phenomenon. This phenomenon is really linked with the persistence of an authentic current in poetry and the existence, all through the nineteenth century, of a kind of direct, simple poetry mainly, but not always, employed in the rebellious political theme. In fact, the nineteenth century poetry in Iraq, was, as al-Baṣīr perceives, a very good anticipation of twentieth century poetry there.[68] It can be said that

what the dissenting* political poetry in Iraq achieved on an artistic level as early as the second quarter of the nineteenth century, was the maximum that Arabic poetry achieved at the time, al-Bārūdi of Egypt not rising to fame except after al-Jamīl had already been dead.

The persistence of this authentic current made it also possible for al-Ḥabbūbi, towards the end of the century to enrich Iraqi poetry with fluency, a gentleness of emotions, a choice of poetic diction and a more subdued tone. No basic change of imagery can be detected in his poetry, but this is not expected at that early date, for imagery in poetry changes only when a real change in the poetic sensibility is achieved. However, al-Ḥabbūbi is regarded by al-Dujaili as the pioneer in modern Iraqi poetry.[69] Al-Dujaili regards him as the bridge between the "dark period" and modern times.[70] It has been seen how this concept is highly inaccurate because Iraq had never been devoid of an authentic poetic contribution. The idea of a bridge between a dark period and an enlightened one overlooks the achievement of al-Akhras,[71] al-Jamīl as well as all the other rebellious political poetry that was written in the nineteenth century.

With al-Ḥabbūbi, however, a tradition of a simplified poetic diction is established. A Bedouin streak faintly appears, just as it appears in much of the poetry of other Shī'ah poets,[72] but the general aspect is that of an urbanised poetic diction. His authentic poetic gift and his Classical Najafi education combined to elevate his poetry and free it from many of the decadent streaks of much of the love poetry before him.

The examination of the nineteenth century Iraqi poetry shows the roots of present day creativeness in Iraq. This work, unfortunately, cannot give more space for a more detailed study of the poetry of this period in Iraq, but the basic point should be clear now. Despite the predominance of decadent streaks in Iraqi poetry in the nineteenth century,

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* The words "dissenting" or "rebellious" are used in this chapter with "political poetry" to differentiate between this genuine kind and the political poetry which dealt with the eulogy of the Wālis or Sultans, with the pro-Ottoman spirit, etc.

there was an authentic current which expressed itself in simple, direct and emotionally genuine verse, and which arrived even at organic unity in some of Al-Akhras's poems. Despite the presence of occasional weaknesses, this poetry was in the process of modernisation even before the Arab literary renaissance in Egypt and Syria (including Lebanon) had begun to have effect on the nineteenth century poetry in these countries. When finally the Arab Renaissance came fully to Iraq at the turn of the century, a quick shift to a more modernized poetry was accomplished. The experiments which followed were finally able to arrive with Iraqi poetry at a point of supremacy in the Arab world during the fifties of this century, as will be shown in a later chapter.

On a pan-Arabic scale, the unifying factor in poetry was the tyranny of the Ottoman rule. Towards the Ottomans there were two attitudes. The first an all-Ottoman spirit revealed in some poetry over the Arab world which showed enthusiasm for a pan Islamic unity under the Ottoman Caliphate,[73] and the other an Arab nationalist spirit bent on reform.[74] This trend, even in the nineteenth century, played on the nostalgic and deeply exciting theme of past Arab glory, a theme exhausted to its full in the twentieth century. Because of Ottoman suppression there was a great deal of immigration by Syrian (including Lebanese) poets and writers to Egypt, Europe and the Americas, where they went in search of freedom as has been mentioned above. Iraqi poets, however, poured forth their criticism even in Iraq itself.[75]

(ii) Syria and Lebanon

Mention here is due to the court of Emīr Bashīr al-Shihābi in Lebanon, and the attraction it held for poets. Emīr Bashīr's court attracted poets and men of letters who included the famous Buṭrus Karāmah (1774-1851),[76] Niqūlah al-Turk (1763-1828),[77] Nāṣīf al-Yāzijī and Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq. As to the court poetry itself, it was weak in language and imagination but might have had, nevertheless, a revitalising influence

because it gave rise to a great poetic activity in Lebanon and other Arab countries, through al-tarāsul.[78]

Syria, however, had seen some unusual attempts in verse. Jubrā'īl Dallāl(1836-1892), a Christian poet from Aleppo who was perhaps the first Arab martyr of free thought in modern times,[79] wrote poetry of protest satarizing the authority of the clergy and the tyranny of kings and calling for a republic.[80] Rizq Allah Ḥassoun portrayed quite a different experience. He, Marrāsh and Dallāl were among the many Syrians who wrote their poetry in exile. His anthology, Ash'ar al-Shi'r has been mentioned above as an example of the continuation of a purely Christian current in modern Arabic literature. His other anthology, Al-Nafaḥāt, consisted of two parts: the first was a translation of allegorical tales from the Russian poet Krylov, an attempt at translating from Russian which seems to have been the first in Arabic literature,[81] and the second part of the anthology was in the old tradition of Arabic poetry: he satirized and praised and wrote poems expressing longing for the fatherland and poems of sorrow and lamentations.[82] Rizq Allah Ḥassoun, moreover, was one of those nineteenth century men of letters from Syria and Lebanon who wrote about freedom and helped in the general awakening of the Arabs, sending his poems and writings from London just as his other townsman, Francis Marrāsh, was sending his from Paris.[83]

It must be stated at the outset that these poetic attempts, despite the activity they aroused, could not accomplish in the poetic art anywhere near a true revival - neither the talents of the poets concerned nor the forces within the poetic art itself were strong enough to command a general decisive change. The Lebanese Khalīl al-Khouri (d.1907), however, seems to have been the first to be liberated from an old outworn way of expression and to write good poetry at the same time. He has four anthologies of poetry all published before 1884. 'Abbūd declares him to be the first innovator who created wonderful images in his poetry and wrote original

poems on independent subjects.[84] Actually, his originality lies in his new way of approach and his new use of images while preserving the strength of style and diction. In this he outshone his student Marrāsh,[85] and the poet Ḥassoun, both innovators in themes. One wonders why Khouri did not leave a greater influence on his contemporary poetry, for there is no mistaking the often modern imagery and the strong urbanized phraseology of his poetry. This might be due, however, to the mildness of his theme, a mildness which prevented an actual break through.

(iii) Palestine and Trans-Jordan

The poetic adventures in Syria (and Lebanon), despite their limited scope did not include Southern Syria which is the part known, after the first World War, as Palestine and Trans-Jordan.[86] Neither in the eighteenth nor in the nineteenth centuries did this part of Syria enjoy the benefits of a strong cultural tradition. It does not seem ever to have been the centre of a strong cultural activity. This phenomenon has been noted by other observers. One writer says: "If we go deep into the history of Palestine, we will find that she had not produced along the centuries any but a few talents that appeared every now and then ... and it was rare that any two of them lived contemporaneously."[87] But the reasons he advances for this are not really valid. The first reason he gives is the fact that it is a holy place. The second is that it lacks in beautiful scenery. The holiness of Jerusalem cannot be over-estimated, but this being so one would expect a great cultural tradition, both Islamic and Christian, to have thrived there. Yet, despite this fact, the important Islamic centres of culture did not include Jerusalem, nor did the Christian tradition in modern Arabic literature ever begin or take root there. As for natural scenery, the desert itself produced some great talents. The secret lies, probably, in the fact that Palestine seems to have been less fortunate than other Arab countries (vilayets as they used to be called then) in the amount of state education allotted to it. The

first intermediate school was founded at Jerusalem only in 1889, the first full secondary school in 1913.[38] This southern part of Syria seems to have remained cut off from the main cultural current that blew between Egypt and Lebanon, often reaching Iraq. Its relations to the Arab world, especially its cultural relations, were rather weak all through the nineteenth century.[89] Palestine, moreover, has never been the home of any political authority[90] having no princes to help and encourage poets and writers; whereas Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus and Cairo can each boast of a caliphate or a princedom which made it the centre of cultural progress and effervescence. Palestine, in fact, was neglected, politically and administratively by the Turks.[91] One phenomenon, relevant here because it has repeated itself again in recent times, was that the few literary talents of Southern Syria who contributed to the main stream of Arabic literature in the nineteenth century were mostly talents thriving outside the region, having studied and lived for the most part away from their birth place which was therefore deprived of their cultural influence,[92] and was denied an early start in a cultural tradition. This is very important, because a sort of "rawness" in the artistic conception is still apparent in present day Jordan (i.e. the remaining part of Palestine after 1948, and Trans-Jordan) where a certain provincialism persists.

(iv) Egypt

In nineteenth century Egypt poetry suffered the same defects prevalent in the various Arab countries. Al-'Aqqād describes the poetic activity in nineteenth century Egypt in an interesting little book,[93] showing the situation to be, with the exception of al-Bārūdi's contribution, affiliated with the palaces of the great and wealthy. The court of Emir Bashīr in Lebanon was matched in Egypt not only by the court of the Khedives, but also by the palaces of the influential and prominent men of society who were out to imitate the life of the great in Classical times.[94] All the foremost Egyptian poets of the nineteenth century, not excluding

the proud revolutionary 'Abdallah al-Nadīm[95] (poet, orator, journalist, writer, leader and teacher),[96] hovered around the court and the salons of the great.

Maḥmūd Ṣafwat al-Sā'ātī (1825-1880), by far the best Egyptian poet before al-Bārūdi, was a eulogist in the old tradition of al-Mutanabbi whom he loved and memorized.[97] His poetry was a good step from the poetry of his contemporaries. It was mostly serious, modelling itself on the Classical poetry and not suffering the inherent weakness of style so prevalent in the poets around him. But he could not get rid of the mannerisms of his immediate poetic tradition, despite his great knowledge of al-Mutanabbi and other Classical poets.[98] He followed the fashion of ta'rīkh, poetic riddles and wise-cracks as well as the rest of the embellishments.[99] He is, however, the stepping stone between the poetry of the Age of Decadence and that of al-Bārūdi.[100]

Trailing behind, but filling the literary world in Egypt with their empty verse, come the other poets. Some of them were court officials whom al-'Aqqād called al-dīwāniyyūn الديوانيون. The others were the poet companions of the great al-nudamā' الندماء. All of them indulged in eulogy too, and were dependent on their relations with the Khedive or the other prominent men of Egypt. The court poet 'Abdullah Fikri (1834-1889) was the most famous among them and was a prominent official at the court of Ismā'īl.[101] His poetry, however, suffered from affectations, exaggerated embellishments[102] and a general weakness in the elements of poetry.[103]

The poet companions of the great played a distinct role in the general social life of the higher Egyptian society in the nineteenth century. They are of interest to this work because of the great contrast they offer to the change of poetic sensibility that took place in this century. Perhaps their role is the worst role Arab poets played in the history of Arabic poetry. It was the role of half poet, half entertainer.

Both al-'Aqqād[104] and al-Dusūqi[105] describe it at length. The poet companion had to have a good general knowledge, had to be versed in old Arabic literature: in its poetry and prese, its anecdotes and proverbs, and had to be quick witted and intelligent. He had to give council, or consolation, if the situation needed them, or humour and wit if it asked for these. He was often called upon to extemporise some verses for a chance occasion. There was never to be any relaxation from this strenuous attendance upon the whims and moods of the great person. Patience and self-control, as well as a constant amiability, were always needed. This increasingly affected urbanity stole away the remnants of strength and virility which had characterized Arabic poetry. It blocked all the outlets of the poetical self, and a thick wall stood now between poetry and the human heart.

The two most famous poets of this "school" as al-'Aqqād puts it[106] were 'Ali 'l-Laithi (1830-1896) and 'Ali Abu 'l-Naṣr (1800?-1880). It is noteworthy to mention here that al-Laithi, before his death, cursed anyone who would attempt to publish his anthology of poetry, a sort of oblique confession of an inner disrespect for the role it was made to serve. 'Abdullah al-Nadīm, too, before his death, tried to collect his poems and burn them, but found them lost. They contained too much unholy satire, he said.[107] *

It was now clear that poetry needed a breath of fresh life. The question was how it was going to be achieved. Any attempt at rejuvenating

* It is not easy to know how long this tradition remained active in Egypt. But it did not die completely, it seems, even in recent times. The present writer personally knew an Egyptian poet who lived this tradition up till the last minute of his life which ended in Kuwait in 1964. He is Muḥammad Muṣṭafa Ḥamām, versifier of the first degree, one of the quickest wits in poetry in an era when poetry did not only become serious and involved in life, but also tragic in many of its examples. Muḥammad Muṣṭafa Ḥamām knew the art of munādamah perfectly, memorized thousands of verses, some of them his own, roved about the Arab world eulogising princes, and filling the courts of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, as well as the literary salons of the Arab capitals he visited, with his ready wit and fluent anecdotes. He tried to live by this talent, but could not manage to do that permanently, and had to resort to some journalism and broadcasting to survive. The whole sensibility of the age had changed.

the poetry of the time by the process of borrowing from some foreign fields would have been a failure. For it was not only meaning and attitude that were in need of change (two elements easily borrowed from, or influenced by foreign poetry), but the whole framework, diction, idiom and sentence formation were in a pathetic state. A return to a firm and strong basis, a connection with the best of the same language and tradition was the only way for Arabic poetry in Egypt then to escape from the decadent state into which it had fallen at the mid-nineteenth century. Poetry had to forge a link with the Classical poetic contribution, stripping itself of the mannerisms and superficiality of the Age of Decadence. The poetry to forge a link with had to be a model of the Classical poetry at its best where the framework, diction, idiom and sentence formation were themselves paragons of excellence.

This task was accomplished by Mahmūd Sāmi 'l-Bārūdi. He was a descendant of a noble Circassian family[107] belonging to the Turco-Egyptian ruling class.[108] Many factors in his earlier life have combined to mould his poetic achievement. He had attended the Military School where the sons of the ruling class studied for a military career.[109] Had he studied at al-Azhar of the mid-century, he would have perhaps graduated as other talented Azhar men of his time did, a finished product of a narrow system of education and special way of thinking on entrenched traditional lines. The Military School, in not giving him any literary education,[110] left him free to follow his own inclinations and when, after graduating in 1854, he found himself out of work as a result of the reactionary policy of 'Abbās and Sa'īd after him,[111] he used his leisure time to nourish a deep longing he had for reading. His main interest in reading seems to have been poetry. It is well known that he read Dīwān al-Hamāsah and the anthologies of the Classical poets.[112] It is probable, moreover, that he was not interested in Classical prose, for his prose style, even towards the end of his life when he wrote his introduction to his diwan, (published posthumously), kept

true to the style of rhymed parallelisms and other nineteenth century prose mannerisms. But poetry he read with fondness, having been probably influenced by a family tradition in poetry, his maternal uncle being a poet,[113] and also by his own great natural talent. He read extensively,[114] storing hundreds of images and poetic expressions.[115] It was easy for him to skip an immediate poetic tradition for which he felt neither loyalty nor interest. He was basically a soldier belonging to the ruling class and feeling far above the self-effacing kind of poetry common at the time. Being emotionally detached from the poetical traditions of his age, he was free.

This situation proved of utmost importance to the development of modern Arabic poetry in Egypt. Al-Bārūdi's poetry was a direct, simple but powerful and virile expression of a proud nobleman whose only model was to be the best in a Classical tradition now brought to life by the movement of Revivalism. Al-'Aqqād refers what he calls his poetic 'leap' to the national freedom felt by the Egyptians during the reign of Ismā'īl and which culminated in the Arābist revolution.[116] But al-Bārūdi's poetic personality was already formed long before these events[117] in which he took an active part as an already prominent figure.[118] In fact, his avoidance of the poetic traditions of his day was conscious and based on a clear understanding of the poet's role and importance as he saw them:

الشعر زين المرء ما لم يكن وسيلة للمدح والـــــذام

He was only too aware of the importance of the work he was doing. Poetry, he explained in his introduction to his anthology,"is a flash of the imagination that sparkles in the thought and is transmitted to the heart to overflow on the tongue ..."[119] The best poetry is that which has harmony of diction, beauty of meaning and a far reaching objective; it should be clear, easy to understand and free from affectations and ambiguity. There is an altruistic end to all poetry in his opinion, for it widens the understanding, refines the spirit and urges towards noble deeds.[120]

The pattern he followed was a fixed pattern modelled on the Classical poetry. He remained permanently caught in its grip, hardly evolving at all. Neither in form[121] nor in context do we see much basic change in his poetry over the years. But that was not really asked of him. It was sufficient that he should perfect (as far as it was possible for him to perfect) the one pattern he set himself to revive, that he should banish from poetry the sham and affected, the hollow and decorative, and affirm the positive and elevated role of poetry in a society about to evolve. His talent was spontaneous and instinctive, and the circumstances of his limited formal literary education in his school days, of the availability at the mid-century of anthologies of the old poetry,[122] of his seemingly early ignorance of European languages[123] seem providential in the extreme. Most later critics seem to understand the importance of Bārūdi's work in connecting nineteenth century Arabic poetry with the Classical poetry.[124] They vary, however, in judging his originality and his capacity for expressing his personal experience and of mirroring his age.[125] Zaki Najīb Maḥmūd proves the dependence of al-Bārūdi on the imagery of the old poetry saying that the poetry of al-Bārūdi was "not /a mirror of/ his life but the result of his reading /in the old poetry/".[126] Actually his poetry reflects both. He expressed in his poetry that part of his life which he felt could be expressed, emphasised and laid bare to the world. The social allowances and limitations of his age played a good part in directing and limiting his capacity for further self-expression. He was primarily a public figure, a soldier and a man of ambitions. His poetry had to enhance and not hinder his progress in life towards these goals. It suited him perfectly to take the old poetry as his model because his career, his spirit, his outlook and his whole personality were not alien to it. In fact, in keeping to the subjects of the old poetry: chivalry, fakhr, description, war poetry, elegy, longing, satire and even eulogy at times (he wrote some praising the Khedives, but on a limited scale), he was in harmony not only with his

own basic attitudes towards life, but also with the spirit of his age. People still thought and lived by the old standards. Moreover, the flow of liberal thought in the nineteenth century and the relative freedom of intellectual adventure[128] were not in contradiction to the basic attitude in the old poetry which, despite the abundance of eulogy, was often free and always proud in spirit. This is why al-Bārūdi's sort of traditionalism, based on the better examples of the Classical poetry, was right and harmonious to a large degree. Critics like M. A. al-Saḥarti who do not seem to appreciate the extent of al-Bārūdi's achievement,[129] or like al-'Aqqād who think that al-Bārūdi's traditionalism could have been greatly minimized through a wider knowledge of the poetic art and its functions,[130] overlook, not only the natural limitations of his situation, but also its absolute suitability as a vital link in the chain of poetic development in modern times.

Thus with al-Bārūdi, the corner stone of the neo-Classical school of poetry in modern Arabic literature was laid. This school is characterized by a serenity and strength of style, by strong resonant rhymes, by a well chosen diction and a clarity of meaning, by a directness of approach and above all by its great concern with form and music - a form which had been already perfected and fixed, and a music which was an integral part of that form. This school, perpetuated later by Shauqi to its greatest limits, was destined to play in modern Arabic poetry not only the rule of revivalist and saviour which it played in its earlier and more robust days, but also that of self-appointed watchman and judge which it persisted in playing long after its real job had been accomplished. Right from the beginning it adopted a superior attitude being affiliated with the revived Classical poetry which had regained a collossal respect in the hearts of the modern Arabs, a respect arriving at reverence, which has never been overcome on a general scale. This attitude was to act as a buffer force against any experiment which seemed to deviate from the Classical model

'of perfection', and when overcome in the fifties of this century by the forces of creativity, was to utter a cry of protest that still rings in the contemporary periodicals with ever increasing force.

The poetic experiment of al-Bārūdi, it must be remembered, was a unique experiment in his time rather than a part of a natural general reaction to progress - a sort of precocious example. All the writers on al-Bārūdi seem to agree on his merit of 'uniqueness'[131] in an age still dominated by traditional standards.

Ismā'īl Ṣabri (1854-1923) whose name is often connected with al-Bārūdi, is possibly the first Egyptian poet to show the effect of a Western education in his poetry.[132] He wrote his best poetry, however, in the twentieth century when his poetic gift had matured,[133] but by that time he was already overshadowed by the towering figure of Shawqi. Ṣabri was not a great poet, but some of his poetry is of quite a good standard, and is perhaps the first poetic contribution in Egypt to reflect a modern mind sensitive to the conflicting currents in the literary field: currents of Classical revivalism and currents of modern progressive thought.[134] However, the effect of the Classical heritage on him seems to be stronger than any effects of Western culture.[135] But it is important to note here that Ṣabri, unlike al-Bārūdi, was no Mediaeval poet.[136] His poetry, genteel, musical and often misty, reflects the tastes, life, aspirations, refinement and limitations[137] of the urban upper class officials in Egypt during the time of the British occupation. There is a marked divorce in his poetry from the pompous self-assured attitude of al-Bārūdi and a noticeable if not predominant trend towards a contemplative attitude, decidedly modern. Some of his poems show an originality and a unity of theme and meaning.[138]

Aside from the usual themes of eulogy and nationalism, Ṣabri wrote on such themes as God, love and death. The last two themes drew the attention of critics because they saw signs of originality and authenticity in them.[139] A kind of lyricism appears in his poetry which Mandūr regards

as the beginning of modern lyricism in Egypt.[140] This is at its best in his love poems. His famous[141] poem Liwā' al-Ḥusn which has given birth to a great deal of interpretations[142] can be singled out as a unique expression of a refined and unusual sensibility. Writers on him disagree as to the meanings of this original poem, written probably in 1901,[143] but none of them saw in that poem Ṣabri's refined love of beauty as an absolute:

ان هذا الحسن كالماء الـــذى فيه للأنفس ري وشفـــــــاء [144]

The beautiful woman he talks to is idealised in a way unknown in modern Arabic until Sa'īd 'Aql:

انت روحانية لا تدعـــــــــي ان هذا الحسن من طين ومـــــاء [145]
وانزعي عن جسمك الثوب يبـــــن للملا تكوين سكان السمـــــاء
واري الدنيا جناحي ملـــــــك خلف تمثال مصوغ من ضيـــــاء

The whole poem points to a new sensibility and a shift in human and poetic attitudes which might have been due to a basically refined nature whose consciousness had been heightened by readings in French literature. Muṭrān saw in this poem a combination of Classical and French influences.[146] Mandūr believes that this poem expresses a true experience and that it might have been written on the famous Lebanese woman writer Mai Ziyādah.[147] But his interpretation is inadequate because it does not rise to the level of the poem itself, which is an expression of a deep longing, nearly metaphysical, to beauty and perfection.[148]

The metaphysical aspect of Ṣabri's poetry has not been treated, even by Mandūr, as such. This might have been overlooked because it is sometimes a subtly illusive element in his poetry:

اتزودت من ضياء البـــــدور لليال كثيفة الديجـــــــور [149]
املأت العينين من قبـــــل ان يدهمـــك البين من بهاء ونـــــور

His attitude towards death is interesting for he seemed to have a longing for death, free of fear or anguish:

يا موت ها انـــــذا فخـــذ ما ابقت الايـــام منـــــي [150]
بيني وبينك خطـــــــوة ان تخطها فرجت عنـــــي

and:

151 ان سئمـــت الحياة فارجع الى الارض تنم آمنـــا من الاوصـــاب
تلك ام احنى عليـــك من الام الـــتي خلفتك للاتعـــاب
لا تخف فالممات ليس بمســـاح منك الا ماتشتكي من عـــذاب
....
وحياة المرء اغتراب فأن مـــات فقد عاد سالمـــا للتـــراب

Those verses betray a wistfulness quite alien to the fundamentalist attitude of his younger contemporary, Shauqi. In fact, one can feel in Ṣabri's occasional flashes of insight an original spirit submerged most of the time under the weight of a traditional life[152] but capable at times to find an outlet.[153]

Ṣabri's poetic diction is greatly urbanised and is comparatively quite modern. His imagery is often traditional, but is sometimes quite original:

154 غدا يصبح الصراع عناقـــا في الهيولى، ويصبح العبـــد حـــرا

and this: 155 كأن حبيبا في خلال حبيبـــه تسرب اثناء العناق وغابـــا

His image of sea, ships and waves, sustained over several lines is another good and original example:

156 انت يم الحسن فيه ازدحمـــت سفن الآمال يزجيها الرجـــاء
يقذف الشوق بها في مائـــج بين لجين عناء وشقـــاء
شدة تمضي وتأتي شـــدة تقتفيها شدة ،هل من رجـــاء ؟

The following is also an original example of his use of imagery:

157 اوجه مثلما نثرت على الاجـداث وردا ان هن ابديـــن بشـــرا

In his original poems, Ṣabri paves his way, quite early in modern poetry, towards an emotional veracity. What is interesting to us here is the fact that we can, through the few poems which are not committed to one kind or another of externalised experience, get acquainted with the personality of this poet, and like him. One can feel in poems like "Akhlāq al-Nās"[158] (the title of the poem does not give it credit), that this well-tempered, urbane poet harboured the seeds of social rejection in his heart, a rejection which could not find a way to appear in its full flavour at that early date.

Ṣabri cannot be regarded fully as a nineteenth century poet, for his

best poetry was written in this century, as has been mentioned. However, before turning to talk on the twentieth century contribution, mention is due to the nineteenth century Egyptian critic Ḥusain al-Mursifi (d.1889). His book in two volumes on the sciences of the Arabic language and (in the second) on literary criticism, entitled Al-Wasīlah al-Adabiyyah ila 'l-'Ulūm al-'Arabiyyah, was the best reference of its kind in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Al-Mursifi based his critical concepts mostly on those of Classical Arab critics, but brought his work to a contemporaneous level by elaborating on his ideas by quotations from al-Bārūdi whom he seems to admire greatly. The book, however, can be regarded as a continuation of the old critical tradition.[159] Al-Mursifi himself, however, was an important literary arbiter in his own time, and did much to enhance the literary activity in Egypt through his teaching in Dār al-'Ulūm (founded in 1872) and his publications in the periodicals of the time.[160]

But it was the Syrian Egyptianized group of writers and thinkers[161] who introduced new ideas on poetry in Egypt. They worked there during and after the reign of Ismā'īl in an atmosphere of comparative freedom, having carried with them into their adopted country the fruits of a highly mixed culture, very much impregnated with Western methods and concepts.[162] I. Adham regards this group (who included Zaidān, Farah Antūn, Ya'qūb Sārrouf, Mutrān and others) as a distinguished class by themselves, unique and toweringly outstanding, not only in their own age, but also in the following.[163] It was at their hands, as Najm agrees,[164] that the first movement towards a systematized method of poetic criticism started. They published their critical articles in their newspapers and magazines[165] and practically formed a school of thinking which was both loyal to the Arab literary heritage yet interested in what was new and adaptable in foreign fields. "Their articles included discussions on meaning and form, truth and objective in literature, spontaneity and avoidance of affectation

as well as on the role of the imagination, emotion and style in the literary work",[167] and it was the magazines and newspapers both in Syria and Egypt which finally made the link between the literary contribution of the various Arab countries.

(v) Tunisia

The eighties of the last century, which saw the confirmation of foreign rule in Egypt, saw also another political aggression in Tunisia, for in 1881 the French armies occupied that country and established French rule there.[168] Muḥammad al-Fāḍil Ibn ʿĀshūr, however, describes a gradual influx of Western ideas and habits into the country as far back as fifty years before occupation. This was introduced by the European settlers in the country, particularly the French.[169] However, Tunisian literature in pre-occupation years does not seem to reflect this general awakening in Tunisia to the fact of a superior Western civilisation,[170] but remains "imitative and weak in spirit".[171]

Poetry in Tunisia in the greater part of the nineteenth century was benighted, like the pre-renaissance poetry in the Arab East. It showed the same defects of decorativeness, hollowness and superficiality. It was bent on tarāsul, tashtīr, takhmīs and other characteristic defects.[172]

The beginning of the literary renaissance in Tunisia seems to have been first prompted in the nineteenth century by local cultural developments. However, locally prompted efforts of the Tunisians, despite their significance, were not enough to achieve a true renaissance, and the Tunisians finally were obliged to lean greatly on the literary achievements in the Arab East.

The events of the last century saw the rule of an enlightened prime minister, Khairiddīn. He was a man of Circassian origin[123] who seems to have been cultured and progressive, with a fair knowledge of the French language. During an eight year rule (1869-1877) he was able to enhance several cultural developments. He founded al-Ṣādiqiyyah School[175] and

re-organised the teaching at al-Zaitūnah College Mosque,[176] for many centuries the citadel of learning and culture in Tunisia. He also established a large library[177] containing many periodicals as well as a large number of the then recent books published in the Arab East and in Europe.[178] This was "a strong factor in linking educated Tunisians with the [cultural] currents of their time".[179] Knowledge and literature were now transmitted more widely and the love of reading and learning was strengthened.[180]

Another achievement of this minister was the encouragement of books and periodicals at the Tunisian printing press.[181] This had been founded some fifteen years before but its activities were showing signs of deterioration.[182] Now, according to Ibn 'Āshūr, many literary and historical books and periodicals were published at this press.[183] It is interesting to note here that the first two men to be appointed as supervisors of its activities were non-Tunisian: one was a French Orientalist and the other an Egyptian.[184]

The movement of secularism, which aimed at introducing modern scientific subjects in Arabic to the curriculum to compensate for curricular deficiency in al-Zaitūnah College Mosque (mostly bent on religious and linguistic studies), was introduced in 1896 by a society called "al-Jam'iyyah al-Khaldūniyyah".[185] Consequently, the Zaitūnah College Mosque caught to some extent the spirit of reform and progress.[186] It is interesting to note here that the movement of al-Shaikh Muḥammad 'Abdū in Egypt found one of its most fertile grounds in Tunisia. A large number of Tunisian educated men were bent on religious reform.[187] Muḥammad 'Abdū himself visited the country at the turn of the century[188] and apparently left a deep impression on the educated elite.[189]

This local progressive movement in Tunisia in the nineteenth century was given greater strength and incentive by the literary renaissance in the Arab East. It is apparent to the student of this period that educated Tunisians were in constant touch with the Syrio-Egyptian literary and

cultural movement. Periodicals such as al-Manār, al-Muqtaṭaf, al-Hilāl and al-Diyā',[190] seem to have introduced greater enlightenment to the Tunisian reader and so also did the works of such writers as Jurji Zaidan, Rafīq al-'Aẓm, Muḥammad Farīd Wajdi, Rauḥi 'l-Khālidi, Sulaimān al-Bustāni, Aḥmad Fatḥi Zaghlūl and others.[191] Modern prose, as achieved in the Arab East, gradually influenced the style of Tunisian writers,[192] and the neo-Classical poetry of Ḥāfiẓ and Shauqi was at the basis of the poetic revival in the country.[193] Ibn 'Āshūr makes an interesting and meaningful observation when he declares that it was the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ which enjoyed the greatest popularity.[194] This must have been due to the close connection between Ḥāfiẓ and Muḥammad 'Abdū.

Tunisian educated men also benefited greatly from the movement of Revivalism in the Arab East[195] which was largely bent on the revival of Classical books, diwans and anthologies of poetry.

Aside from Eastern Arab influences, the introduction of the French language and culture was steadily increasing with the years.[196] Tunisian writers with some knowledge of French found easy access to some sources of French culture which were present in Tunisia itself among the settlers.[197]

The next generation in Tunisia, that which grew up at the beginning of this century, was becoming more Westernised as the French system of education established itself in the country.[198] From the beginning of this century two streams of culture started flowing side by side, the Classical Islamic stream and the French stream.[199] Gradually but steadily, this was to introduce a schism in the culture of the country, a schism from which, not only Tunisia, but Morocco and to an even greater extent Algeria were to suffer to a considerable degree.

Al-Khaldūniyyah Society aimed at reform within an Arabo-Islamic framework. Its members were among the greatest enthusiasts of Muḥammad 'Abdū.[200] But in 1905 the Society of "Qudamā' al-Ṣādiqiyyah"[201] was formed. This Society aimed at a greater Westernisation of culture and at introducing

basic changes in thought and in the way of life of the society and of public institutions, from a Western point of view, but without losing sight of the national aims of the country.[202]

The continuation of an early progressive movement in Tunisia, together with other political, religious and cultural factors, was to safeguard, in some measure, the Arab literary tradition in the country. But although a strong link with French culture was established early in the century, two factors remain apparent. The first is that Tunisia's most important poets in the first decades of this century (who include al-Shābbi, the only one among them to leave an important impression on Arab readers in the Arab East) do not seem to have had any significant French education. In fact al-Shābbi did not know any foreign tongue at all, as will be shown. The second is that Arabic poetry in Tunisia during those decades, with the exception of that of al-Shābbi, never attained any significant heights. The fact that Arab creative talent in Tunisia, as well as in Morocco and Algeria, and even Libya could not impose itself on the modern literary contribution in Arabic except in rare examples, deserves a special research for which this work is not prepared. This research will have to be done in these countries, because much of the source material is not available in the libraries of the Middle East or Europe.[203]

The poetic revival in Tunisia, like that of the Middle East, was first instigated by national awakening. It has been shown how Iraqi poetry in the nineteenth century was able to pave its way to simplicity and relative modernity when it treated political or social subjects. The Tunisian poets, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,also felt the promptings of nationalism and the desire to express their concern for reform and progress. In this they were urged greatly by the example of the poets in the Arab East.[204] However, according to Ibn ʿĀshūr, they seem to have found it at the beginning a rather difficult goal to achieve, apparently on purely artistic grounds. Ibn ʿĀshūr says "Thinkers and men of letters

in Tunisia started to give their attention and admiration to this kind of literature [national and social] and to aspire to emulate the poets of the [Arab] East in this."[205] But this was not achieved "until al-Shaikh Muḥammad al-Nakhli started this for them ... with a poem exceeding eighty verses which the [Tunisian] newspaper, al-Ḥāḍirah, published in 1319 [H or]-1901 [A.D.]"[206] This poem appeared under the title of "al-Shi'r al-'Asri" (modern poetry),[207] a term which meant in Tunisia the major trend of poetry written at that time in the Arab world. It was a poetry bent on social reform and political emancipation, on singing the praises of past Arab glory and on urging towards freedom and progress.[208]

After this attempt other poets in Tunisia seem to have followed suit,[209] and as social and national consciousness developed, poetry linked itself firmly with the movement of liberation and reform.[210] The call for reform was mainly linked with Islam.[211]

Tunisian poets writing on these subjects chose for their sources of inspiration contemporary Arabic poems written by Middle Eastern poets on such themes.[212] Since these were mostly of a traditional nature, and since poetry in Tunisia had not had any strong revival in the nineteenth century, a sort of blockage of real creativity in poetry appears to have taken place. Another important factor was that modern schooling, on a general level, seems to have been mostly carried out in the French language.[213] Arabic literature and language were mostly the concern of Islamic institutions.

Footnotes

1. Zaidān in his Tarīkh Ādāb al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah, Vol. IV, divided the nineteenth century into three epochs with regard to poetry: the first until 1863, i.e. until the beginning of Ismā'īl's rule, the second from 1863 when a poetical revival took place until the Occupation and the third from the Occupation until the date of writing the book, see ibid., pp.231, 235 and 240. But such definite divisions in art are never perfectly sound. Al-Bārūdi was writing his poetry before that date. The division of artistic trends to suit political and historical episodes has been an easy habit of many writers on Arabic literature in modern times, as has been discussed in the introduction.

2. For more on this see Haddārah, Al-Tajdīd fī Shi'r al-Mahjar, Cairo, 1957, pp.14-5.

3. For more details on this genre see 'Abbūd, Ruwwād, pp.42-9; Haddārah, op.cit., pp.13-4.

4. 'Abbūd, Ruwwād, p.49 and Ru'ūs, pp.287-8; for an account of tarāsul between Iraqi and Lebanese poets in the nineteenth century and of mu'āradāt some of which arrived at high level of artistry, see Al-Ma'ārif magazine, Beirut, June and July number, 1963, pp.42-8, an article by Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Rashūdi entitled "Baina Udabā' al-'Irāq wa Lubnān".

5. A.M. 'Aqqād, Shu'arā' Misr wa Bī'ātuhum fi 'l-Jīl al-Mādi, first edition, Cairo, 1937, p.22. This kind of versification, although no more used in serious poetry, is greatly employed in Lebanese zajal and enjoyed fully by most Lebanese.

6. See Ḍaif, op.cit., pp.38-9; A. Hammoudah, Al-Tajdīd fi 'l-Adab al-Miṣri 'l-Hadith, Cairo, [1950] pp.37-8.

7. M.Y. Najm, "Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah", Al-Adab al-'Arabi fī Āthār al-Dārisīn, Beirut, 1961, p.334.

8. See a summary of his ideas in Najm, ibid., pp.334-6; in Khalaf Allah, op.cit., pp.180-92.

9. On his panegyric poetry see M. Ṣawāyā, op.cit., pp.127 and 128.

10. Ahmad Fāris al-Shidyāq, Manāhil Al-Adab al-'Arabi series, Beirut, 1935, pp.75.

11. See Kanz al-Raghā'ib, III, for many examples of his panegyrics.

12. Ibrāhīm al-Wā'ili, Al-Shi'r al-Siyāsi al-'Irāqi fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsi' 'Ashar, Baghdad, 1961, p.69; this should not mean, however, that Iraqi poets were completely cut off, for in fact they published in al-Shidyāq's periodical, Al-Jawā'ib, and had strong relations with him and other nineteenth century Lebanese poets; see also Al-Ma'ārif magazine, the article by al-Rashudi, op.cit.

13. Al-Wā'ili, op.cit., p.69.

14. Yūsuf 'Izziddīn, Al-Tayyārāt al-Adabiyyah fi 'l-'Irāq, Baghdad, 1962, p.8., where he specifies poetry written on trivialities.

15. Ibid., p.7; , al-Maqdisi, op.cit., pp.26-7 speaking on eulogy in all Arabic poetry at the time; al-Wa'ili, op.cit., pp.203-18 and 222-58.

16. Yūsuf ʿIzzidīn, Al-Shiʿr al-ʿIrāqi, Ahdāfuhu wa Khaṣā'iṣuhu fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ ʿAshar, Baghdad, 1958, p.33.

17. Maqdisi, op.cit., p.26, where he describes it as flattery.

18. It was only in the preface to the second edition of his book Al-Shiʿr al-ʿIrāqi fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ ʿAshar, Cairo, 1965, that Y. ʿIzziddīn mentions the vitality of the nineteenth century Iraqi poetry and realizes that it is in great need of further research. In the first edition he did not seem to think well of it.

19. The earliest of three important studies on Iraqi poetry in the nineteenth century is Muḥammad Mahdi al-Baṣīr's book Nahḍat al-ʿIrāq al-Adabiyyah fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ ʿAshar, Baghdad, 1946. This praises and even exaggerates the value of the literary activity in Iraq during that century and attempts to link the poetic creativity of nineteenth century poets with more modern ones (p.331), but fails to describe the forces and qualities at play on poetry during that century. The second is Y. ʿIzziddīn's work, mentioned above; and the third is Ibrāhīm al-Wā'ili's most valuable work, also mentioned above. In al-Wā'ili's book the reader can find the sources of strength and virility that fed Iraqi poetry and kept the current of creativity alive during those troubled times. However, despite the evidence at his hand, al-Wā'ili does not realise the full artistic value of the political poetry in Iraq in the nineteenth century, see his chapter pp.259-95. Other books on twentieth century poetry in Iraq often have introductory chapters on the nineteenth century poetry. See A. al-Dujaili, Al-Shiʿr al-ʿIrāqi 'l-Ḥadīth, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1959, pp.3-15; Daūd Sallūm, Taṭawwur al-Fikrah wa 'l-Uslūb fi 'l-Adab al-ʿIrāqi fi 'l-Qarnain al-Tāsiʿ ʿAshar wa 'l-ʿIshrīn, Baghdad, 1959, pp.27-70; Aḥmad Abū Saʿd, Al-Shiʿr wa 'l-Shuʿāraʾ fi 'l-ʿIrāq, Beirut, 1959, pp.4-5.

20. Al-Maqdisi in Ittijāhāt has much less to say on Iraqi than on Syrian and Egyptian poets; see "Taḍārub al-Nazaʿāt al-Adabiyyah fī ʿAhd al-Sulṭān al-ʿUthmāni ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Thāni", pp.15-41 (ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II reigned 1873-1908). Another example is U. al-Daqqāq Al-Ittijāh al-Qaumi fi 'l-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi 'l-Ḥadīth, see his chapter "Bawākīr al-Shiʿr al-Qaumi", pp.15-29; similarly Gibb in his essay on nineteenth century Arabic Literature, S.O.A.S. Bulletin, 1926-1928, IV, 745-60 does not discuss Iraqi poetry.

21. Al-Wā'ili, op.cit., p.99; al-Baṣīr, op.cit., p.10; ʿIzziddīn, Al-Shiʿr al-ʿIraqi fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ ʿAshar, pp.26 and 27.

22. On the religious "madrasas" of al-Najaf, for example see the valuable work of Jaʿfar al-Khalīli, Mausūʿat al-ʿAtabāt al-Muqaddasah-Qism al-Najaf, Vol.II, Baghdad, 1966, pp.33-194; see also J.B. Āl Maḥbūbah, Mādi 'l-Najaf wa Hādiruhā, Najaf, 1953, pp.124-47.

23. "Al-Adab al-ʿArabi 'l-Ḥadīth fi 'l-ʿIrāq", Al-Risālah magazine, Cairo, No.404, 31st March, 1941, pp.372-6.

24. Al-Wā'ili, op.cit., pp.36-39.

25. Ibid., pp.43-9; ʿIzziddīn, Al-Shiʿr al-ʿIrāqi fi 'l-Qarn al-Tasiʿ ʿAshar, pp.14-5 and 24-5.

26. Al-Wā'ili, op.cit., pp.70 and 74-5.

27. Ibid., pp.66-7, 67n, 75-6; ʿIzziddīn, Al-Shiʿr al-ʿIrāqi fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsiʿ ʿAshar, p.23.

28. On the lack of real religious feeling among these tribes see al-Wā'ili, op.cit., p.83.

29. Ibid., pp.77-9.

30. Ibid., pp.80-7.

31. Al-Baṣīr, op.cit., p.13; al-Wā'ili, op.cit., pp.108-10 describes the poor life of these poets, and asserts that they, despite poverty, persisted in writing poetry for love of poetry (p.109).

32. Muḥyi 'l-Dīn Ismā'īl, "Malāmiḥ min al-Shi'r al-'Irāqi 'l-Ḥadīth", Al-Ādāb magazine, January, 1955, p.57.

33. Al-Wā'ili, op.cit., p.111.

34. Al-Baṣīr, op.cit., pp.10-1; A. al-Hilāli, Al-Shā'ir al-Thā'ir 'Abd al-Bāqir al-Shabībi, Baghdad, 1965, p.30.

35. Al-Wā'ili, loc.cit.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. I. al-Sāmirrā'i, Lughat al-Shi'r bain Jīlain, Beirut, n.d., p.27.

39. Al-Wā'ili, op.cit., pp.110-2.

40. Al-Baṣīr, op.cit., pp.10-1; 'Izziddīn, Al-Shi'r al-'Irāqi fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsi' Ashar, p.114.

41. Al-Dujaili, op.cit., p.26; al-Hilāli op.cit., p.26 describes the abundance of poets in Najaf also.

42. Al-Dujaili, loc.cit.

43. On the circles of poetry and learning in Najaf see 'Ali 'l-Sharqi, Al-Aḥlām, Baghdad, 1963, in which he has very interesting chapters describing this kind of life where poetic traditions were nourished; see also Ja'far al-Khalīli, Hākadhā 'Araftuhum, Baghdad, 2 vols, 1963, 1968.

44. Al-Dujaili, loc.cit., al-Wā'ili, op.cit., pp.111-2.

45. These traditions are still prevalent in al-Najaf, see Dujaili, loc.cit.

46. For more on al-Najaf's importance as a centre of literary activity see Maḥbūbah, op.cit., pp.388-96; on its libraries which were in use in the nineteenth century see pp.148-63, and on those still in use see pp.163-74; see also Ja'far al-Khalīli, Mausū'at al-'Atabāt al-Muqaddasah, Qism al-Najaf, II, 197-267 for public libraries, and 268-316 for private ones.

47. See al-Dujaili, op.cit., pp.20-1.

48. Al-Wā'ili, op.cit., pp.45, 181-2 and 184; 'Izziddīn, Al-Shi'r al-'Irāqi fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsi' 'Ashar, pp.90-1, 111 and 230.

49. Ibid., pp.113-4; al-Wā'ili, op.cit., p.182.

50. On this poetry see ibid., pp.273-9.

51. Quoted in ibid., p.124.

52. Both al-Wā'ili and 'Izziddīn show this clearly; see for example 'Izziddīn, "Al-Qaumiyyah wa 'l-Siyāsah", Al-Shi'r al-'Irāqi fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsi' 'Ashar, pp.157-86; al-Wā'ili, op.cit., pp.149-80.

53. Al-Ma'ārif magazine, Beirut, June and July number, p.43; verses written sometimes between 1840 and 1845; for more examples of a poetry free from artificiality see Wā'ili, op.cit., pp.151-78.

54. Al-Wā'ili, op.cit., pp.174 and 282; see also 'Abbās al-'Izzāwi, his introduction to Majmū'at 'Abd al-Ghaffār al-Akhras fī Shi'r al-Ustādh 'Abd al-Ghani 'l-Jamīl wa mā Qālahu 'l-Ākhras fīhi, Baghdad, 1949, p.20; also Sāilūm, op.cit., pp.57, 65 and 66.

55. Majmū'at, p.29.

56. Ibid., p.48, the verses taken from a mukhammas by al-Akhras on al-Jamīl's original verses.

57. Quoted by 'Izziddīn, Al-Shi'r al-'Irāqi fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsi' 'Ashar, p.164; see also pp.165, 168, 171, 181, etc., for examples of al-Akhras's political poetry.

58. Ibid., pp.192 and 3.

59. See al-Baṣīr, op.cit., pp.119-20 for two delightful examples; the second one is also quoted by 'Izzidīn, Al-Shi'r al-'Irāqi fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsi' 'Ashar, p.198.

60. Ibid., pp.196-7.

61. Ibid., pp.193-4. Compare also the poems of al-Akhras with those of a contemporary of his, al-Sheikh 'Abbās al-Najafi (1823-1757) whom al-Baṣīr calls "the amorous poet" (op.cit., p.210). See examples of his poetry, ibid., pp.212 and 213-8; these poems are traditional in imagery, expressions and emotional attitudes.

62. For examples of these love overtures see Makhṭūtat Shi'r al-Akhras, Shā'ir al-'Irāq fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsi' 'Ashar, edited by Yūsuf 'Izzidīn, Baghdad, 1963, pp.21-3 and 30-2. N.B. This lovely verse on wine on p.21

لطفت حتّى كأن لم نـــــــــرها فتخيّلنا الوجود العدما

63. For an account of al-Ḥilli's achievement see al-Baṣīr, op.cit., pp.40-71.

64. For an account of al-Tamīmi's achievement see ibid., pp.72-88.

65. For an account of al-'Umari's achievement see ibid., pp.89-113; see also al-Wā'ili, op.cit., p.176.

66. See 'Izziddīn, Tayyārāt, pp.9-10, where he speaks of the sudden change.

67. Ibid.

68. Al-Baṣīr, op.cit., pp.330-1.

69. Op.cit., pp.1 and 32; al-Baṣīr, op.cit., pp.14-5 regards him and Ḥaidar al-Ḥilli as the two pioneers of modern Iraqi poetry.

70. Op.cit., p.32. On pp.4 and 32 he calls him the pioneer.

71. This poet deserves a detailed and separate study; Y. 'Izziddīn mentions in the preface to the Makhṭūtah, p.5, that he is writing a book on this poet who was regarded as the foremost poet in the nineteenth century in Iraq.

72. On the Bedouin streak in Shī'ah poets see al-Sāmirrā'i, op.cit.,p.27.

73. Al-Maqdisi, Ittijāhāt, pp.15-22 and 26-7.

74. Ibid., pp.28-35.

75. Ibid., p.33.

76. On Karāmah's life and work see ʿAbbūd, Ruwwād, pp.55-63; Chiekho, op.cit., pp.54-61; Zaidān, Mashāhīr, pp.189-92.

77. On Turk's life and work see ʿAbbūd, Ruwwād, pp.50-4; Cheikho, op.cit., pp.18-9 and 36-40.

78. ʿAbbūd, Ru'ūs, p.237, for more examples of tarāsul see Cheikho, op.cit., pp.59-60.

79. On his torture and death see Kayyāli, Al-Adab, pp.61-2; Al-Ḥarakah, pp.55 and 73-3; see also ibid., pp.73-85 for a version of the poem which caused his death.

80. He died in prison where the instigation of the clergy had landed him as a result of his poem a/m entitled "Al-ʿArsh wa 'l-Haikal" in which he attacked both clergy and kings; see ibid., pp.73, 76, 77, 78; Zaidān, Tārīkh, IV, 247.

81. Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.52.

82. Ibid., pp.52-3.

83. Maqdisi, op.cit., p.31; see also Zaidān, Tārīkh, IV, 274.

84. Ruwwād, p.88.

85. Ibid.

86. For the original divisions of al-Urdunn and Filasṭīn see N. Asad, Al-Ittijāhāt al-Adabiyyah al-Ḥadīthah fī Filasṭīn wa 'l-Urdunn, Cairo, 1957, pp.8-9.

87. Muḥammad Salīm al-Rashdān, "Al-Adab fī Filasṭīn", Al-Risālah magazine, No.684, 13th August, 1946, p.897.

88. N. Asad, Al-Shiʿr al-Ḥadīth fī Filasṭīn wa 'l-Urdunn, p.10.

89. Ibid., p.11.

90. Asad, Al-Ittijāhāt, p.23.

91. Ibid., p.28.

92. Ibid., pp.28-9; Al-Shiʿr fī Filasṭīn, p.12.

93. Shuʿarā' Misr wa Bī'ātuhum fi 'l-Jīl al-Māḍi.

94. Ibid., p.100.

95. See ibid., p.88.

96. Ibid., pp.93-7.

97. U. Dusūqi, Fi 'l-Adab al-Ḥadīth, I, 92.

98. Ibid., p.98.

99. Ibid., pp.98 and 104.

100. Al-ʿAqqād, op.cit., p.122.

101. On his career see Dusūqi, Fi 'l-Adab al-Ḥadīth, I, 106-7.

102. Ibid., p.107.

103. See ʿAqqād, op.cit., p.82; see many examples of his poetry in Dusūqi, Fi 'l-Adab al-Ḥadīth, Vol.I, 110-1, et passim.

104. Ibid., pp.100-3.

105. Fi 'l-Adab al-Hadīth, I, 84.

106. Op.cit., p.103.

107. Ibid., p.90.

107* U. Dusūqi, Mahmūd Sāmi 'l-Bārūdi, Cairo, 1958, p.22; Muḥammad Haikal in the introduction to Dīwān al-Bārudi, Cairo, 1940, I, 6.

108. Dusūqi, Al-Bārūdi, p.23 and n, for an example of the social distinction of classes in Egypt at the time.

109. Ibid., p.22.

110. Al-'Aqqād, Shu'arā' Miṣr, pp.125 and 126, where he mentions that al-Bārūdi studied grammar and prosody by himself; see also Ḍaif, Al-Adab al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āṣir, pp.87-8.

111. Dusūqi, loc.cit; Haikal, op.cit., p.7.

112. Ibid., p.8; Ḍaif, op.cit., p.84.

113. Dusūqi, Al-Bārūdi, p.31.

114. Al-'Aqqād, op.cit., p.126.

115. Ibid., p.125 quoting H. al-Murṣifi.

116. Ibid., pp.120, 121 and 123 where he puts great stress on the liberating influence of national freedom; see also Ḍaif, op.cit., pp.43-4.

117. See Muhammad Sabri, Adab wa Tārīkh, second edition, Cairo, 1927, pp.26-30 for examples of his poetry before the Arabist revolution.

118. See ibid., pp.39-54 where the role of al-Bārūdi in the Arabist revolution is described fully; see especially p.54 on the effect of these political events on his poetry.

119. Dīwān al-Bārūdi, the introduction, I, 3 of the diwan proper (i.e. excluding Haikal's introduction). In the above quotation the superfluous, decorative language is overlooked.

120. Ibid., pp.3-4.

121. Some timid adventures outside the traditional form have been noted, e.g. his poem in majzū' al-mutadārak which seems an adventure in his time, see Dīwān al-Bārūdi, I, 121-3.

122. M. Mandur, Qadāyā Jadīdah fī Adabina 'l-Ḥadīth, Beirut, 1958, p.94.

123. Al-Bārūdi knew Turkish and Persian. No knowledge of French had been mentioned by his biographers, but a belated knowledge of English which he learnt in his exile at Ceylon has been recorded. This, however, oould have had no influence on his already mature poetry. For his knowledge of Persian and Turkish, see Dusūqi, Al-Bārūdi, p.23; Haikal, op.cit., p.11. For his study of English see ibid., p.28, Dusūqi, Al-Bārūdi, p.25.

124. Ibid., p.51; Al-'Aqqād, op.cit., pp.121-2 and 132; Ḍaif, op.cit., p.44; Haikal, op.cit., pp.13-4.

125. For writers who think he pictured his life and age see Ḥammoudah, op.cit., pp.91-4; Haikal, op.cit., p.5; al-'Aqqād, op.cit., p.133 where he says that he reflected his own personality, see also pp.139-40; Dusūqi, Al-Bārūdi, p.51.

126. Falsafah wa Fann, Cairo, 1963, p.373.

128. For a full account of the intellectual achievements of Arabic thought in the nineteenth century see Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age.

129. Al-Shi'r al-Mu'āsir 'alā Dau' al-Naqd al-Ḥadīth, Cairo, 1948, p.220, where he overlooks the fact that to succeed in producing a poem in the Classical style, was already an achievement in itself at the time.

130. Op.cit., pp.141-2.

131. Hammoudah, op.cit., p.94; al-Dusūqi, Al-Bārūdi, p.51; M. Ṣabri, op.cit., p.23; Z.N. Maḥmūd, op.cit., p.383; al-'Aqqād, op.cit., p.122; Zaidān, Tārīkh, IV, 250; Ḍaif, op.cit., p.44.

132. He did some studies in France; for probable Western influences on him see M. Ṣabri, op.cit., pp.135, 137, 146; al-'Aqqād, op.cit., pp.33-4; Ḥammoudah, op.cit., p.95.

133. M. Ṣabri, op.cit., p.125; see also pp.126-55.

134. See ibid., p.139.

135. See Apollo magazine, September, 1934, for writings of Aḥmad Muḥarram on Ṣabri's Classical influences.

136. See al-'Aqqād, op.cit., pp.32-9; Ḥammoudah, op.cit., p.95.

137. On the political limitations imposed on Sabri by his official position see U. Dusūqi, Fi 'l-Adab al-Ḥadīth, II, 115-21.

138. See his two poems "Al-Sā'ah" and "Al-Dawāt", Dīwān Ismā'īl Ṣabri Bāshā, edited by Aḥmad al-Zain, Cairo, 1938, pp.188-9 and 133-5 respectively.

139. Anṭūn al-Jumayyil in his essay on him in Dīwān Sabri, p.20; Mandūr also sees his authenticity in his ghazal, see Ismā'īl Sabri, Cairo, 1956, pp.13 and 14.

140. Ibid., p.31.

141. Mandūr says that it surpassed all his other poetry, ibid., p.8.

142. See ibid., pp.8-14.

143. Mandūr, however, puts doubts as to this date, ibid., p.13.

144. Dīwān Sabri, p.107.

145. Ibid., p.109.

146. Quoted by M. Ṣabri, op.cit., p.139.

147. Mandūr, loc.cit.

148. See ibid., pp.8-14; Mandūr, however, talking on another poem sees Ṣabri's love of moral beauty, ibid., p.29; see also the comment of U. al-Dusūqi on this poem which he completely misunderstood calling it cheap and materialistic, Fi 'l-Adab al-Ḥadīth, II, 280-1; see also al-'Aqqād's comment on this poem, which also does not give it an adequate interpretation, op.cit., p.35.

149. Dīwān Ṣabri, p.112.

150. Ibid., p.191.

151. Ibid., p.190.

152. See his many poems of congratulations and eulogy in his diwan, ibid., pp.1-91.

153. See his poem on God, ibid., pp.192-4.

154. Ibid., p.143.

155. Ibid., p.110; see also Mandūr, Ismā'īl Ṣabri, pp.17-8, where he rightly defends him against the accusations of plagiarism.

156. Dīwān Ṣabri, p.108.

157. Ibid., p.141.

158. Ibid., pp.140-3.

159. Najm, op.cit., p.317; see also the essay of Mandūr in Al-Naqd wa 'l-Nuqqād al-Mu'āṣirūn, Cairo, n.d., pp.7-24, on al-Muṛsifi's work.

160. M. Ṣabri, op.cit., p.119.

161. Ismā īl Adham, Al-Muqtataf, March, 1939, Vol.94, iii, 303-4 and 307 discusses in an interesting manner the reasons which he thinks have allowed the Syrian writers to seek change earlier than the other writers in the Arab world; Gibb, SOAS Bulletin, IV, 748, mentions also that Westernisation in the nineteenth century in Syria grew quicker than in Egypt.

162. See Adham, op.cit., pp.296-7.

163. Ibid., p.297.

164. Ibid., pp.317-8.

165. These included Al-Muqatataf, Al-Hilāl, Al-Bayān, Al-Diyā', Al-Zuhūr, Al-Muqtabas, and others.

166. Najm, op.cit., p.318.

168. M.F. Ibn 'Āshūr, Al-Harakah al-Adabiyyah wa 'l-Fikriyyah fī Tunis, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1956, I,5.

169. Ibid., pp.8-10.

170. Ibn 'Āshūr, ibid., p.10, observes that the changes introduced to the pattern of life, although not reflected in the literature written in the classical language, were indeed reflected in oral zajals which were set to music. This shows the natural vitality of zajal as compared with formal poetry.

171. Ibid., p.38.

172. Ibid.

173. Ibid., p.13.

174. Ibid.

175. Ibid., p.23.

176. Ibid., pp.23-24.

177. Ibid., p.24.

178. Ibid., p.25.

179. Ibid.

180. Ibid., pp.25-26.

181. Ibid., p.26.

182. Ibid.

183. Ibid., pp.26 and 71.

184. Ibid., p.26.

185. Ibid., pp.54-55.

186. Ibid., pp.56-58 and 66-68.

187. Ibid., p.58.

188. Ibid., p.59.

189. See ibid., pp.59-60.

190. Ibid., p.68.

191. Ibid.

192. Ibid., p.69.

193. Ibid., pp.69-70.

194. Ibid., p.70.

195. Ibid., pp.70 and 115.

196. Ibid., p.71.

197. Ibid.

198. Ibid., pp.81-83.

199. See ibid., p.82.

200. Ibid., p.59.

201. Ibid., p.88.

202. Ibid., pp.37-38.

203. The second volume of Ibn ʿĀshūr's book is made up of selections of prose and poetry by Tunisian authors in modern times, selected by the author at the special request of the Institute of Higher Arabic Studies in Cairo, a request prompted by the lack of Tunisian references and periodicals in the libraries of the Arab East. See II, the introduction.

204. Ibid., I, 78.

205. Ibid.

206. Ibid.

207. Ibid., on p.79 the writer mentions another poet, al-Shaikh al-Khuḍr, to have published a poem under that title. Al-Nakhli himself also published under this general title, see ibid., II, 36-7, for a poem by Nakhli.

208. Ibid., I, 79.

209. Poets like Ṣāliḥ al-Suwaisi, ibid., pp.79-80 and II, 23-24 and pp.44-45; see also Zain al-ʿĀbidīn al-Sanūsī, Al-Adab al-Tūnisi fi 'l-Qarn al-Rābiʿ ʿAshar, first edition, Tunis, 1928, II, 231-256; other poets are Muḥammad al-Khaḍr Husain, see Ibn ʿĀshūr, I, 79-80 and II, 50, 53-54 and 58-59; also Sanūsī, op.cit., pp.193-230

210. Ibn ʿĀshūr, op.cit., I, 78-80 and 114-116.

211. Ibid., p.115. It is also interesting to note that Islam even at a later date remained the object of much intellectual interpretation. Among the first four lectures ever to be given in Arabic in Tunisia there were three lectures on Islam. These were delivered at Qudamā al-Sādiqiyyah club in Tunis, the first cultural institution to introduce the system of public lectures in Tunisia. See ibid., p.89.

212. Ibid., p.73.

213. Ibid., pp.81-2.

PART II : MODERN ARABIC POETRY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

CHAPTER ONE : EARLY DEVELOPMENTS

SECTION 1 : CONFIRMATION OF NEO-CLASSICISM

The emerging figure of Shauqi (1869-1932) was the greatest poetic event of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. "The poet of his generation",[1] who stood "far above the rest",[2] Shauqi's achievement merits a far greater discussion than this work can give. Summed up, it was great and vitally important. He was the continuation and culmination of the neo-Classical school started by al-Bārūdi. With him the Classical method in poetry established itself as a revived and modernized pattern to be held again with the greatest esteem by the majority of the Arabs. This had a double edge; for Shauqi was able to regain for Arabic poetry its original vigour[3] and recapture its old mastery of an expression that was flowing and shimmering with life.[4] But on the other hand, he established the Classical pattern so firmly that it came to be regarded as the model pattern for poetry with the result that any attempt at a radical innovation in form and style was later to meet with great difficulties.

Moreover, Shauqi, at the beginning of his career, was unfortunately a court poet. He had grown up within the precincts of the royal palace in a rich aristocratic environment.[5] Then at the law school where he studied, he became closely acquainted with his teacher in Arabic al-Sheikh Muḥammad al-Basyūni, a poet himself, who discovered Shauqi's poetic talent and guided it, pushing him in the way of the poets of eulogy which was the only genre of poetry he composed.[6] Thus it was very easy for Shauqi to consecrate the first years of his life as a poet to Khedive 'Abbās's poems of praise and glorification. He was the Khedive's protege and it was he who sent him to France to study law.[7] This continuation of the old tradition of court poetry with its pompousness and insistence on the outside description of a set theme (although Shauqi never really lost his particular mark),

rather than on the poet's own experience, did confirm these traditional qualities acquired through centuries of surrender to a set pattern of eulogy. The time gained for poetry through the exceptional talent of Shauqi was partly lost later on in trying to get rid of traditional attributes confirmed in poetry through Shauqi's involvement in a theme which did not fit the modern sensibility; for this gave the modern Arabs not only new contemporary examples of poems of eulogy with recent names and living references, but made it easier and more natural for assemblers of anthologies of the Classical poetry to include any number of poems of eulogy in them. This was going to lie heavily on modern Arabic poetry, and although it was to suffer in part a sort of metamorphosis in direction, diverting itself towards poems of eulogy of the nation or of patriotic and national leaders, the approach itself, with its pompousness, resonance, grandiose style, its dependence on catchwords and phrases and its divorce from experience was going to persist, accounting for a great split in contemporary poetry between two contradictory currents. This, however, will be discussed later on as part of the contemporary poetic scene.

But it must be stated at the outset that Shauqi's survival among present day Arabs is due, not to the first phase of his poetry when he was living in the environment of the court and praising the Khedives and the Ottoman Caliphs,[8] but to the two later phases of his career: the phase of his exile in Spain[9] where he wrote some of his best poetry on the past glories of the Arabs as well as his greatest poems of nostalgia for his country; and the last phase which started after his return to Egypt and continued until his death. In this stage, Shauqi, liberated from court routine and court affiliation, echoed in his poetry all the great events that took place in the Arab world, and in the last few years of his life, attempted dramatic poetry. As the twenties advanced his poetry had gained such a prestige in the Arab world that he was honoured in 1927 by being named the prince of poets at a big official celebration in Cairo

in which the Egyptian government and delegations from the various Arab countries participated.[10]

The main interest of this work in Shauqi lies in a general estimation of his work as a final affirmative force of revivalism which put Arabic poetry firmly on its feet, and in his position as a final link binding modern Arabic poetry more strongly to its roots. The work begun by al-Bārūdi needed confirmation and strengthening before poetry could really start looking for newer and more modern links. Al-Bārūdi had been able to free Arabic poetry from the mannerisms and superficiality of the poetry of the Age of Decadence and to connect it with its Classical roots. He was not able, however, to supply modern Arabic poetry with a model of excellence capable of restoring to it the full splendour and glow of the best Classical verse. In fact, such a task would have been extremely difficult to achieve so suddenly at that particular time and against that particular background. But when Shauqi came one generation later, it was possible for him to build on the foundation laid by al-Bārūdi and give back to the Arabic poetry of his time that missing glow which was a great feature of the Classical poetry. Ismā'īl Maẓhar, a younger contemporary poet and a critic of intuition and good modern sensibility said in this context: "... only once a poet like Shauqi would appear to take in his hands the remnants of Arabic poetry and give it new life; ... Shauqi's glory is therefore due to two inseparable elements: an undeniable genius, and a piece of good fortune that had for centuries awaited Egypt and her great poet".[11]

In this short essay al-Bārūdi and his work are completely ignored, but despite this deficiency, the criticism is decidedly modern and fresh revealing an independence and sobriety of judgment. One of the main causes of controversy, not only around Shauqi's poetry, but around the Classical poetry as a whole, has lain in the attempt of Western educated critics forcefully to apply Western standards of criticism to this poetry,

and in an automatic method of comparison, prove its failure. But one cannot judge poetry in this way. Poetry is the expression in art of a people's emotional and spiritual experience, and its first merit lies in its ability to convey their emotional and spiritual fervour. The only real drive towards change of its methods and attitudes does not lie in a direct application of imported standards, but in an inner change of sensibility. During Shauqi's career the poetic sensibility had not yet changed much and when, in the last phase of his career, the poetic attitude was already showing some signs of change, it was too late for him to grasp fully the new spirit.*

Shauqi, especially in the twenties, suffered numerous attacks from Western educated critics of the younger generation, the most important of whom were Ṭāhā Ḥussain and al-'Aqqad. The latter was his most bitter critic who tried to strip him of all merit.[13] More on this raging battle which filled the literary world of the twenties in Egypt will be said in a later chapter. Al-'Aqqad's strongest points against Shauqi were that Shauqi was a traditionalist who wrote poems of occasion, of mu'āraḍah, and praised the Khedives in the traditional manner of the old poets.[14] His description of things, he insisted, was superficial and devoid of aesthetic value. He did not feel the true essence of things and their relation with

* Several writers criticised Shauqi's shortcomings in introducing more changes in poetry. Among these S. Ḍaif criticised his inability to introduce significant changes despite his awareness of the need for change as revealed in his introduction to his diwan published in 1898. Ḍaif, unaware of the **obstacles standing** between the awareness of the poet and his capacity to carry it out at such an early stage of the development of the poetic art, blames him. Mandūr also blames him in no uncertain terms saying "Despite his stay in France at the end of the nineteenth century when France was seething with literary battles and schools such as Romanticism, Symbolism, Realism and the Parnassian school, he was unable to react to these concepts and come out with a new poetic philosophy in which he combined these /Western concepts/ and his vast Arabic culture. The result would have been a universal poetry combining a new content and a wonderful structure." This sounds strange coming from a sober critic like Mandūr who should have realised that neither Shauqi nor the tools of Arabic poetry at the time were ready for an assimilation of the sophisticated concepts of the French poetic field at the end of the nineteenth century. A.G. Karam also says something to the same effect.[12]

life, but resorted to similes that described their outer appearance, not their effect on the feelings.[15] Ṭāhā Ḥussain accused Shauqi of not having evolved much over the years,[16] of timidity in the face of criticism and in introducing change in poetry,[17] of a deficient culture[18] and of resorting to poems of mu'araḍah.[19] But despite all the criticism directed against him by these writers who were gaining rapid fame in the twenties, as well as by others, Shauqi's fame in Egypt and the Arab world was increasing all the time, built on a real appreciation of his poetry. The homage paid to Shauqi by his contemporaries all over the Arab world was unparalleled during his life-time,[20] and also on his death.[21] He is, moreover, the only poet of his generation whose work is robustly alive at the present time. Other poets live on in a few poems or verses of social or national significance. But Shauqi lives on in all his good poetry. He is sung, quoted, read and memorized all over the Arab world, and despite any shortcomings he had, he is marvellously entrenched among the most important bards of the Arab poetic heritage.

Such a place which a people instinctively give to a poet cannot be simply the result of the man's fame and prestige, and any student of the poetic history of the period must stop and examine his ascendency and permanent popularity. The secret of his continuing fame lies, probably, in the following points. First, Shauqi was a great craftsman, a quality recognised even by al-'Aqqād.[22] He resembles the best of the Classical poets in his supreme manipulation of the emotional waves that pervade the Classical poem of high quality. In Arabic poetry, the poem of two hemistichs and the monorhyme can easily fall into a depressing monotony if it is not saved by this emotional fluctuation that concentrates a great intensity of feeling or meaning in verses not too far apart. This is a basic need in this form of poetry, for, before the poem can have time to fall into a monotony of rhythm, a good poet will instinctively supply a verse pregnant with meaning (usually with great meaning such as a wise

reflection or an enthusiastic conclusion, dramatic and final at times) or intensely charged with emotion. Modern poetry now, in its freer form which will be described later on, can charge its verses with a subtle and slowly growing tension, awaiting a final climax at the end, but the Classical form of poetry does not usually resort to this. Instead, the poem is supplied with occasional emotional jets or waves of emotion that flow in fluctuating strength over the whole surface of the poem. This is a natural phenomenon in this form where the verse is usually a complete unit in itself and the poem is not an organic unity developing gradually to a final climax.[23]

The accusation directed later against the Classical form by contemporary critics insisting that it is monotonous,[24] falls apart when one remembers that art contrives its own devices to get out of dangerous situations. When a gifted poet composes, there will be no question of a rigidity of form or a monotony of rhythm. He will find a way out of traps of form and rigidity of metre. The Classical poetry, in its good examples, is not monotonous, nor is Shauqi's poetry. His poetry, in fact, is often exciting, even from a rhythmical point of view. This is all the more so because of the element of music in it.[25] It is a special music, rich and flowing, reaching the point of grandeur at times, very reminiscent of the music in the best Classical poetry, carried along on an emotional stream and strongly interwoven with the meaning of the verses. It is never a music of rhyme and rhythm only, as is the case with inferior poetry.

The second reason for Shauqi's continuing popularity is that he had touched the spirit of the Arabs. Unlike al-Bārūdi, he is not merely a good imitator of the Classical poets, but is one of them, tuned to their rhythm and vigour, vitally reminiscent of their spirit in its more dominant streaks, with one foot in the Abbasid period and another in modern times. He is a combination of what is still alive, potentially or actively, of the old Arabic spirit, coupled with the intellectual

curiosity and spiritual search of the Arabs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In his poetry he carries Islamic fervour and all the emotionalism and the kind of wisdom typical of the Arab people.[26]

The two traits in his poetry which are more representative than others of the traditional spirit of the Arabs are: grandeur and nostalgia.* Shauqi was not a poet of moods and depressions, not of inner strife, but a poet of acceptance and steadfastness. This is an Arab-Islamic state of mind at its healthiest. He had, not only a firm grip on life but a rather broad and grandiose outlook. The most pervasive element in his poetry was the staunch stand he took with regard to everything that his world represented against all attacks on its integrity. His world was broad and wide, and he went wholeheartedly for the big event,[28] the public occasion, the national happening, the pan-Arabic, the all-Islamic, the Oriental scene. He was part of a public front and lived his life much according to this image, in an environment of prominent men and public exhibitionism.[29] He was a poet of celebration ready to change catastrophe itself into an occasion for praise and grand commemoration.[30]

Shauqi, like most city men of his age, who lived in the public eye, had a whole part of his life completely closed to the currents of experience.[31] He lived a gregarious life well tuned to the social norms of the age, completely conscious of the public surroundings. Taking his ghazal, for example, we see that most of it is not really expressive of an inner experience.[32] Woman never seemed to play an apparent part in his life and never was a central theme of his poetry. This was perfectly in tune with the attitude of the age. The Arabs were just emerging from the age of the harem when woman had not yet gained a social status

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* Ghāli Shukri, writing a long article about al-ʿAqqād's critical theory says that Shauqi, in his poems of occasion, lacked warmth of feeling and emotional depth. Shukri here, as he searches for the personal emotional experience in those poems and laments its absence, overlooks the immense store of stock public emotions with which Shauqi's poetry of occasion abounds. In the whole article, the writer seems to be out of touch with the reasons of Shauqi's popularity and cannot see in him anything but a master craftsman of the old technique.[27]

which would give her the opportunity to fill the songs of a Romantic bard.[33] Men of letters looked up to a public position and literature was more exhibitionistic than expressive of man's inner life. But lying behind this façade of social stability and public compromise, there was in Shauqi a more fleeting spirit, a Romantic longing for woman and love which is inherent in the spirit of the Arabs and is echoed all through their Classical poetry. And it was in his experimental poetry (that is in his dramatic poetry) that Shauqi found the freedom to express an inner tenderness full of the Romantic nostalgia of a people whose culture and spirit he had absorbed and reflected. Some of his best love poems were written in his plays: Majnūn Laila and Maṣraʿ Kilyūbuṭra.[34] Using the life of the hero of the play, he was able to pour forth verses of very intense emotions and longing for the feminine image.

But the longing in Shauqi's poetry was not mainly for woman and love. There is in his poetry a deep nostalgia for everything past and remote, for everything loved and unachieved: for the ancient civilisation of Egypt, the greatness of the Turks, the power of the Caliphate, the ambitions of the Arabs, the liberal spirit of Islam, the glories of the Orient,[35] and on a personal level, for youth and for life and its joys.[36] This is a key theme in his poetry, the theme which makes it most akin to one of the most permanent streaks in the Arab spirit over the centuries: the nostalgia.[37] ʿAbbūd compares him with Ḥāfiẓ in this respect and proves his superiority.[38]

Shauqi, however, wrote a great deal of poetry of occasion.[39] Much of it can be easily classed under the title of versification. He himself neglected to include a good part of it in his anthologies.[40] But the bulk of the Shauqiyyāt, his respected anthologies, is one of the most important hinges upon which Arabic poetry turned in the first quarter of the century. By the beginning of the twenties, Shauqi had brought the poetry of the neo-Classical school to its final maturity, to a completion so ripe that it could stand the strain of continuity no longer, and immediately the counter-move in Egypt began.

Shauqi's famous contemporary, Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm (1871-1932), shared with him his pan-Arabic fame, although he remained rather inferior to him.[41] He knew no foreign languages and remained directly related to the Classical poetic contribution,[42] but without losing his own personal approach and poetic personality. However, writers on him have taken little notice of his particular artistic attributes and those who appraised him concentrated their studies on the poet's themic innovations.[43] These last were tied with general events and public occasions,[44] but were also deeply involved with the problems of poverty in his own country.[45] In this he showed a more popular approach than that of the aristocratic Shauqi. In fact, Ḥāfiẓ believed consciously in the social and national duty of the poet.[46] His concept of commitment was not modern in the contemporary sense, but he felt it his duty to participate in all public and social activities, as well as to write on all big events in the world.[47] His friendship with the leaders of reform in Egypt (Muḥammad ʿAbdū, Muṣṭafa Kāmil, Saʿd Zaghlūl and Qāsim Amīn)[48] was conducive to such an involvement, although the involvement in big events and public occasions was a fashion also for the other contemporary poets in Egypt and elsewhere as has been explained. However, in his social poetry, Ḥāfiẓ gained greater fame than Shauqi and his famous social poems were included in the school readers and memorized by young students all over the Arab world.[49]

But although his social poetry seems to have been the direct cause of his fame, it remains quite naive and superficial. This is why Anṭūn Karam, probably studying those more famous poems, concluded that Ḥāfiẓ produced only a kind of "superficial, lyrical, demagogical, oratorical verse whose strength stemmed from popular emotion, and whose effect vanished when the direct cause of the emotional [excitement] had died down".[50] He does not give his poetry a higher value than a historical one. This is a hasty judgment, for Ḥāfiẓ had certain poetic attributes which were particularly his own and which can still be of benefit to the student of the poetic technique.

Judging his poetry as a whole, one can see the causes of his popularity in his social and political poetry. There is a fluency of style, a simplicity and directness of approach and a flow of emotion, which make it immediately appealing to both reader and hearer.[51] He did not have Shauqi's surge of emotions and his grandeur of style, but he had that simple and natural manner most suited to a poet of the people.[52] His greatest attributes, however, lay elsewhere. Ḥāfiẓ had a magnificent capacity, when writing under the effect of something which had moved him greatly, to use very vivid language, strengthened greatly by a vitality in his use of verbs. His poem on a sea storm which he witnessed while travelling by sea is most representative of his magnificent use of his verbs:

53

عاصف يرتمي وبحر يغير ... انا بالله منهما مستجير
وكأن الامواج ـ وهي توالي ... محنقات ـ اشجان نفس تثور
ازبدت ثم جرجرت ، ثم ثارت ... ثم فارت كما تفور القدور
ثم اوفت مثل الجبال على الفلك وللفلك عزمة لا تخور
تترامى بجؤجؤ لا يبالي ... امياه تحوطه ام صخور
ازعج البحر جانبيها من الشد فجنب يعلو وجنب يغور
وهو آنا ينحطّ من علو كالسيل وآنا يحوطها منه سور
وهي تزورّ كالجواد اذا ما ... ساقه للطعان ندب جسور
وعليها نفوسنا احائرات ... جازعات كادت شعاعا تطير
في ثنايا الامواج والزبد المنـ ... ـدوف لاحت اكثابنا والقبور

Ḥāfiẓ did not always achieve this[54] because of his involvement with public events and platform poetry,* which diverted his emphasis towards a more simple and less artistic technique. His authentic talent, however, showed itself also in another characteristic trait, irony. This poet excels in this particular trait which is rare in modern Arabic poetry, producing sometimes comical pictures like this on society:

55 وشعب يفرّ من الصالحات ... فرار السليم من الاجرب

* This name denotes the poetry declaimed from a platform to a large audience, as will be exemplified more fully in chapter seven.

and on newspapers:

56 وصحف تطنّ طنين الذبـــــاب واخرى تشن على الاقـــــرب

Writing from the Sudan describing his state of poverty and destitution he draws a picture relevant to his Sudanese environment and more comical than tragic:

57 وما اعذرت حتى كان نعلـــــي دما ووسادتي وجـه التـــــراب
وحتى صيرتني الشمس عبـــــدا صبيغا بعد ما دبغت اهابـــــي

His comparison with al-Ma'arri in the following verses is not really convincing,[58] because the kind of irony he employs in them tends to lighten the tragic element:

59 لم تلدنا حـوّاء الّا لنشقـــــى ليتها عاطل مـــــن الاولاد
اسلمتنا الى صـــــروف زمـــــان ثم لم توصها بحفظ الـــــوداد

However, he can be very bitter in his irony as in the following verses talking to the British in Egypt:

60 ايها القائمون بالامـــــر فينـــــا هل نسيتم ولاءنا والـــــودادا
خفضوا جيشكم وناموا هنيئـــــا وابتغوا صيدكم وجوبـوا البـــــلادا
واذا اعوزتكم ذات طلـــــوق بين تلك الربـا فصيدوا العبـــــادا
. . . . . .
لا تظنوا بنا العقوق ،ولكـــــن ارشدونا اذا ضللنا الرشـــــادا

His description of his new suit mixes bitterness with subtlety and has a refined kind of ironical approach:

61 لي كســـاء انعم به من كســـاء انا فيه اتيه مثل الكسائـــي
. . . . . .
فكأني ـ وقد احاط بجسمـــي ـ في لباس من العلا والبهـــاء
تكبر العين رؤيتي وترانـــي ـ في صفوف الولاة والامـــراء
. . . . . .
يا ردائي وانت خـــير رداء ارتجيه لزينة وازدهـــاء
. . . . . .
ان قومي تروقهم جدّة الثـــوب ولا يعشقون غير الـــرواء
قيمة المرء عندهم بـــين ثـــوب باهر اونه وبـــين حـــذاء

There was, no doubt, a feeling of wistful loss in Ḥāfiẓ's poetry which must have stemmed from his comparative poverty and lack of achievement in other fields of life.[62] A deep yearning for death can be detected in much of his later poetry.[63] The following verse is an example of the

great heights to which Ḥāfiẓ could arrive:

64. آذنت شمس حياتي بمغيـــب ودنا المنهل يا نفس فطيـــبي

His use of "المنهـــل" for death here is excellent.

Ḥāfiẓ was the victim of both his age and his lack of a good modern education.[65] His authentic poetic gift was submerged under the weight of his public involvements which he believed were the natural duty of poets, and his best poetic attributes were not given enough scope to flower and develop.

SECTION 2: INFILTRATION OF ROMANTICISM

Khalīl Muṭrān played a different role. He was an Egyptianised Syrian and the only prominent poet among the many illustrious men of letters who flocked from Syria and Lebanon at the end of the nineteenth century and made Egypt their new home, helping greatly to establish its literary renaissance.

Muṭrān was born in Ba'laback and studied at Zaḥlah, then at the Patriarchal College in Beirut where he had the extremely good fortune of being the student of both Khalīl and Ibrahīm al-Yāziji.[67] The influence of these two masters, especially of the latter, is seen in Muṭrān's immense care for language in his poetry. Right from the start, moreover, Muṭrān studied French,[68] and his knowledge of Western literature seems to have had a very early start. Right from his first serious attempt at poetry, he showed the mixed influence of a strong Classical and Western culture. This was his poem "1806-1870" on the battle of Jena, which is said to have been written in 1888, when the poet was only sixteen years old.[69] If this is true, then Muṭrān's poetic development was fantastically precocious, for the poem is quite powerful in places, rarely

showing any of the signs of amateurish weaknesses of beginners. Describing a marching army he says:

مشت الجبال بهم وسال الوادی ومضوا مهادا سرن فوق مهـــاد [70]
یحدی بهم متطوعین کأنهـــم عیس ولکن الفناء الحـــــادی

This is very good indeed for that early date, and the poem shows Mutrān's independent poetic personality, as he opens his poetic career with an objective poem that narrates and describes a battle that took place on a distant land.[71]

The political conditions in Syria at the time of Mutrān's youth were oppressive and there was a great deal of coercion by the Ottomans. The Syrian (including Lebanese) poets were among the first in the Arab world to write poems of protest and enticement.[72] Such literary activity was frowned upon greatly by the Ottomans and the poets were exposed to suppression and their lives were threatened. Many Syrian intellectuals were forced to flee their country and take refuge elsewhere. Mutrān was among them, having had to flee his own country because of a nationalistic poem he wrote.[73]

Mutrān spent the rest of his life mainly in Egypt, and it seems that as a stranger, he had to be circumspect and unpretentious.[74] How this has affected his personality and consequently his poetry one can never tell, for Mutrān was a naturally prudent and even-tempered man. His extreme reticence to talk about his personal life[75] betrays a basic reserve in him which should be of great importance to the critic of his poetry. It explains his great tendency to write poetry which was technically objective and yet charged with social messages. This will be elaborated soon. The story of a tragic love affair early in life has not been confirmed with documented evidence,[76] and is in line with the many similar stories about other poets of the younger generation in Egypt, as will be shown in due course. However, Mutrān never got married.

There is a strange controversy concerning Muṭrān. Did he or did he not establish the trend of Romanticism in modern Arabic poetry? What real influence did he have on his contemporary poets and especially on the younger generation amongst them? What was the real value of his achievement?

It is essential to try to assess the role Muṭrān played and determine whether he was an important link between the neo-Classical school and the more modern poetry written in the twenties and thirties.

Is the story of Muṭrān the story of the beginning of change in modern Arabic poetry? It is certain that Muṭrān is held by many literary arbiters to have occupied a prominent position in Arabic poetry in the first decades of this century. He is said to have been the pioneer in introducing innovations in modern Arabic poetry,[77] the first poet of his generation to show modern trends and to free himself from the rigidity of the old poetic order,[78] to have been the predecessor of such poets as al-ʿAqqād, al-Māzini, Shukri,[79] Abu-Shādi,[80] Nāji,[81] and Khalīl Shaybūb;[82] and to be the first poet to introduce the objective trend into modern Arabic poetry.[83] Ismāʿīl Adham, a Western educated critic of Turkish origin and a great admirer of Muṭrān, wrote a series of articles on him insisting that he was a pioneer working on virgin soil and on a new level of creativity amidst a slumbering world[84] in which he was far greater than the rest of his contemporary poets. In fact he insists that Muṭrān was "far greater than the era he lived in,"[85] and that he was the founder of the Romantic trend in modern Arabic poetry.[86]

Long before this, a great celebration in honour of Muṭrān was held in Cairo in 1913 sponsored by Khedive ʿAbbās Ḥilmi II. It was attended by the most illustrious poets and writers of the Arab world and numerous poems and speeches were delivered in honour of the occasion.[87] Then, in 1947, the Arab world again recognised Muṭrān's merit as a poet in a series of celebrations in Cairo and Alexandria,[88] and it was at one of these

celebrations that Ṭāhā Ḥusain, in one of his typically impulsive moods, stood up and declared Muṭrān to be the master of all the poets in the Arab world, not excepting any one.[89]

There are numerous examples of such universal acclaim. Even sober critics like Mandūr acclaimed his leadership in modern poetry.[90] Yet in the face of so much recognition we are confronted by a few strong denials. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dusūqi insists in very strong terms that Muṭrān did not lead the movement of innovation nor create a new current in Arabic poetry.[91] ʿAbd al-Rahmān Shukri strongly rejected the assumption that he had been influenced by Muṭrān's poetic methods.[92] Al-ʿAqqād, while admitting that Muṭrān was an innovator in poetry,[93] denied him any credit for it, for in his view, Muṭrān could not help what he was doing. "He had been brought up in the European literary tradition and the Arab heritage did not impose on him any real loyalty towards either Arabic or Islamic literature."[94] This is of course a fanatical comment on the Catholic Muṭrān and of little value. But al-ʿAqqād goes even further. Muṭrān, he says, did not influence any of the poets who came after him either in expression or in the spirit of his poetry. "For these /poets/ got acquainted with old Arabic literature from its Classical sources, and with European literature from its original sources, especially from English literature....They are more likely to copy directly from European literature and would not need Muṭrān to play the role of intermediary between them."[95]

Al-ʿAqqād assumes a great deal here, for there is nothing to preclude a poet from playing the role of intermediary in a case of this kind. For a poet, himself assimilating, transforming and reproducing in his own language a trend existing in a different literature, can, if he is really gifted, help more to establish that trend in his own language than all the minor poets combined who copy directly from a foreign source. This is so because the task that confronts a poetry in need of change is one of assimilation and not of direct imitation, and this is a task which yields

itself only to the few really talented in any language. What remains to be seen is whether Mutrān was in fact capable of playing the important role of establishing a new trend in Arabic poetry and influencing a generation of poets after him.

Mutrān issued his first diwan in 1908 accompanied by an introduction. In it he insisted on spontaneity but also on the conscious attempt at using words and phrases in unfamiliar similes and unusual ways while keeping to the rules of the language.[96] His poetry, he said, "has not enslaved its writer...the right meaning in it is said in the right words, and its writer has not looked for the beauty of the single verse, while neglecting...the following, but has sought the beauty of the verse in itself and in its place /in the poem/, as well as having cared for the whole poem in its form and order, in the harmony of its meanings, the originality of its images and the newness of its themes, /while seeing that/ all this agrees with the truth...."[97]

Despite its rhymed endings, this introduction impresses by its air of knowledge derived from experience. One of its greatest merits is that it did not presume much more than the poet could achieve. On the whole it describes well Mutrān's kind of rebellion. His rebellion here is against artifice, rigidity of expression and diction, the lack of unity in the Classical poem, the repetitiveness of the Classical theme, and all sorts of shamness in poetry. But there is no real protest against form as a settled pattern in Arabic poetry. In an earlier statement which he published in 1900[98] he had said: "The poetic ways of the Arabs need not be our own....our poetry should represent our own imagination and feelings and not theirs....even though it is poured into their own moulds and uses their own diction."[99]

Before attempting to analyse and sum up Mutrān's real poetic achievement, it is important to note here that he is one of the most illusive figures to study in modern Arabic poetry. For, in the first

place, he combines several contradictory elements in his poetry, the most important of which are the two opposite poles of innovation and conventionalism as manifested in his experimental poetry and in his many poems of occasion. In the second place, the critic does not find it easy to judge the merit of his much praised poetic contribution, from a purely artistic point of view. This will be elaborated shortly.

One of Muṭrān's greatest contributions to modern Arabic poetry was his introduction of narrative poetry into Arabic. His first anthology already contained some of the most famous narrative poems which he wrote.[100] The first attempts at narrative poetry had already been made in the nineteenth century by the poet Khalīl Khouri,[101] but Khouri's was a timid attempt which left no mark on Arabic poetry. Muṭrān's attempt, however, can be regarded as laying the foundation for narrative poetry in modern Arabic. Al-Maqdisi rightly declares that "narrative poetry did not become a genre in /Arabic/ poetry except after our contact with the West."[102] Muṭrān had read extensively in French,[103] and his attempt at innovation in poetry must always be remembered as a conscious attempt made with a full awareness of the necessity of improvising changes that conformed to the spirit of the age.[104]

There is every probability that the poets who wrote narrative poetry after Muṭrān were influenced directly by his attempt. Most of these poets were Lebanese,[105] but some were Syrian and Iraqi and a few were Egyptian.[106] Among the most important of these poets were the Lebanese Shibli al-Mallāṭ, Bishārah al-Khouri, and Būlus Salāmah. The attempt of the Egyptian poet, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Shukri, to write a narrative poem in blank verse entitled "Napoleon wa 'l-Sāḥir al-Miṣri",[107] might have been influenced by Muṭrān's experiment, but is in itself of a low standard chiefly on account of the poet's use of blank verse in a poem of two hemistichs..

Muṭrān, moreover, indulged in descriptive poetry to a great extent.

Even in his first anthology the number of descriptive poems far outnumber any other genre of poetry he attempted. His love of nature is apparent throughout his whole work, again the product of a mixed culture, enhanced by his Syrian background which lingered on in his memory despite his long expatriation in Egypt. It is interesting to note how the Syrian scenic background, with its varied magnificence, has always lived on with the numerous Syrian (including Lebanese) immigrant poets wherever they had gone.

It would be impossible to trace in this chapter all the influences leading to any one trend or movement, but Muṭrān's interest in nature and his insistent description of it must have influenced other Egyptian poets of the following generation who did indulge later on in writing about nature; poets like Shukri, Abū-Shādi, Nāji, ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā and the Syrian Khalīl Shaybūb. Yet these poets who were truer Romantics than Muṭrān ever was, must also have been immensely influenced by their readings in Mahjar**poetry i.e** the poetry written by Arab immigrant poets in the Americas, as well as Western poetry.[108]

The important question that readily comes to the mind of the observer here is this: did Muṭrān's involvement in nature mean that he was a Romantic? Adham claims that Muṭrān was the originator of the Romantic trend in Arabic poetry.[109] He was a Romantic, he says, in his deviation from the conventional theme and his introduction of narrative and 'pictorial' poetry.[110] Adham uses the term 'Romantic' here to denote any attitude deviating markedly from the conventional poetic situation. He is speaking here of the boldness and originality with which Muṭrān paved his way towards a new themic approach in poetry.

As for Muṭrān's involvement with a subjective Romantic expression of the kind employed in Western Romantic poetry, there are signs of this

in his personal poems which are often reminiscent of some remote, sad personal experience.[111] But this tendency is immediately and decisively offset by two factors. Firstly, by that great balance which his poetry enjoys between form and content[112] as well as between emotion and thought, a distinctly Classical attribute.[113] The supremacy of imagination over thought and emotion in his poetry[114] does not help much, because he often forgets to find a voice for himself through the descriptive phrases that crowd the poem. Generally, in such poems, he has the air of total pre-occupation with the outer features of the observable, lacking the sustained fullness of self-projection so common to good Romantic poetry. A good example are the following purely descriptive verses:

114a

هذه الشمس آذنت بالسفـــور ... بعد سبق الآيات بالتبشـــير
فتلقّى ظهورها كل حـــي ... بنشيد التهليـــل والتكبيـــر
هي بكر الوجود لا يتملـــى ... مجتلاها الا شهود البكـــور
اراًيت الصباح يكشف عنهـــا ... كلّة الليل من حيـال السريـــر
فتهاوى ستر الدجى وتـــوارى ... ما عليه من لؤلؤ منشـــور
حيّت الكون حين لاحت فاحيـت ... كل عود لها جديد نشـــور
حيثما طالعت مغانّ خصـــب ... اسفر الترب عن نبات نضيـــر
وانجلى لحظها عن الزهر الغـض ... وعذب الجنى وطيب الصبيـــر
وعوالي النخيل خضر الاكاليـــل ... زواهي المرجان حول النحـــور

When Mutrān does find a voice for himself, which is not very often, he is a mildly contemplative poet in whom nature evokes a strain of emotions or reminescences. But he is never a true part of nature, and never does he know the mystical fusion with nature which Gibrān experienced so deeply.[115] His poetry is marked in general by a controlled emotionalism often generated by his imagination[116] which kindles the mild flow of emotions in it.

The second factor, not irrelevant to the first, is Mutrān's immense capability of objectivity in both his narrative and his descriptive poetry. Many writers have spoken of Mutrān's objectivity, but not all they said is clearly distinctive. For the term "objectivity" can be very ambiguous when it is not defined clearly. The first few decades of this century saw a rebellion against the suppression of the subjective element in

poetry and the insistence of poets like Shauqi and the other neo-Classicists to externalise poetic experience.[117] Most of their poetry was of an objective nature. Their kind of objectivity was also shared by Muṭrān in a large part of his poetry. However, what ʿA. Dusūqī[118] and others mean by the objective trend here is Muṭrān's use of narrative poetry.

Before going further in our discussion of Muṭrān's Romanticism, an important point concerning his craftsmanship must be discussed. According to his own description of his poetical activity,[119] Muṭrān seems to have been a poet who took great pains to polish his work and restrain the flow of emotion in the poem. He asserts that he was in the habit of revising his work with great deliberation and by a process of omission and careful scrutiny, succeeding in polishing his work to his utmost ability. Karam compares him with the Parnassians.[120] Mandūr builds his short study of him on this trait.[121] He compares him to Zuhair ibn Abī Sulma in his "hauliyyāt"[122] and adds that this habit of revision cannot be concluded without the interference of the will and the mind, a fact which must have led the poet to suppress his deep Romantic nature.[123] To him Muṭrān is an authentic Romantic poet who tried to camouflage his Romanticism by employing great self-control.[124] However, Muṭrān's Romanticism would reappear as soon as the poet succeeded in curtaining the self and it would then be donned on the object which aroused the poetic impulse.[125] Such Romanticism Mandūr calls objective Romanticism,[126] a strange term if one remembered that Romanticism is a rebellion against objectivity and externalised experience. Mandūr goes even further than this when he describes it as "a spiritual Romanticism, rarely found in its Western counterpart, but is typically Oriental."[127] To him, the West achieved very little of the spiritualism of the Orient, the land of Prophecy.[128] One can hardly accept Mandūr's idea here, because there are many spiritual elements in Western Romanticism. As for his idea of an objective Romanticism, this is a contradiction in terms. But the

Romantic trend he senses in Muṭrān's poetry stems from Muṭrān's choice of subject matter for his narratives, from those tales of suffering, poverty, treachery, death, heroism, devotion and noble deeds which fill the diverse stories he wrote. The trend to look at the world as a place of horror and wonder where great events take place and where people suffer, fight, and die had become, during the first few decades of this century, quite established. Poets like Shauqi and Ḥāfiẓ participated, each according to his own psychological make-up, in great world events as they happened. What Muṭrān did was to cross the limits of the factual and recount imaginative tales in narrative form. Thus he was able to achieve two things at the same moment: to speak of imaginative happenings, and to do that in the form of a story and not, as his other neo-Classical contemporaries did, as an item of sensational news. It should not follow from this that Ḥāfiẓ, for example, did not achieve a good poem when he wrote about the Messina earthquake, for he indeed did so, but Muṭrān's attempt was unique among his contemporaries in Egypt, and was able to pave the way smoothly to a change from the imaginative objective to a subjective poetry greatly dependent on the imaginative element.

It is common knowledge[129] that Muṭrān resorted to narrative poetry to express his own ideas on society, freedom and tyranny, or to relate in them his own tragic love story.[130] Poems like "Maqtal Buzarjumuhr"[131] and "Nairūn"[132] are full of social and political messages of the most rebellious nature:*

133

ما كان كسرى اذ طغى في قومه — لا لما خلقوا به فعـــــالا

....

لكن خفض الاكثرين جناحهـــم — رفع الملوك وسوّد الابطـــالا

واذا رأيت الموج يسفل بعضـــه — الفيت تاليه طغى وتعالـــى

and this in "Nairūn":

134

ما علينا من غريم غـــارم — ان ازرى الخلق شعب مات صـــبرا

* The six poems collected by Ra'īf al-Khouri in Al-Ṭughāt, all cater to this trend.

Karam is right when he says that Muṭrān seemed to live his poems and experience them,[135] although Karam fails to notice that Muṭrān's narrative, like most of his poetry, often suffers from a mildness of emotion.[136] Talking obliquely on a subject can only achieve real artistic effect when it is touched by a certain fervour and arrives at real poetic heights. Except in verses which carry direct social and political implications, Muṭrān's narratives lack a direct emotional appeal and the subtle build-up which invariably accompanies good narrative or dramatic poetry in any language. He rarely succeeds in enriching the reader with a sustained aesthetic experience but does succeed quite often in supplying him with a noble vision of life and with a final revelation[137] capable of transforming his mood and adding something to his general experience of life.

Muṭrān's experimental poetry proved that Arabic poetry was capable of entering upon virgin fields without losing its recognised attributes, of turning back upon a long-established approach and embracing a wider scope of themes and attitudes without falling apart. In breaking through to such methods, Muṭrān was a revolutionary and a modern, but a modern caught in the grip of a premature epoch when Classicism, even from an artistic point of view, was supreme. This, and probably a naturally reticent nature and a readiness for compromise to an extent, explain the limits he consciously put on the experimental side of his poetry, as well as his dabbling in poetry of occasion. But it must be regarded as a real achievement of Muṭrān to have been able to divorce himself in a great part of his poetry from the continuous involvement of the conventional Arab poet of his time with the outer periphery of public life of one sort or another, with its more exhibitionistic attitudes.

From Muṭrān's writings on innovation in poetry one feels the extreme, even agonising, effort this compromise imposed on him. "Right from the beginning," he wrote, "I wanted to innovate in poetry, but met with opposition and oppression which I shall not discuss here, nor will I

relate here the motives that lay behind such oppression."[138] To him innovation in both prose and poetry is necessary for the vitality of the language.[139] Right from the beginning he must have realised that form in Arabic poetry was one of the most stubborn elements of poetry, and although he would have wanted to introduce changes in form, he did not venture to do so. "I did not want to surprise people with everything that came to my mind."[140] The circumstances of his early life must have left a fear in his heart and a wish for a peaceful co-existence, for he mentions them in this context as inhibiting his adventures in poetic innovation.[141] In fact, one can feel in Mutrān not only the wish to compromise with a more conventional atmosphere in Egypt[142] but also the wish to outdo the neo-Classical poets whose grasp of the language was probably a conscious cause of pride. In an introduction to his long poem "Nairūn", which he wrote in order to deliver at a celebration in his honour at the American University of Beirut in 1924, he declared that he wrote this long poem using only one rhyme, in order to explore the extent of a poet's capacity to write a long, monorhymed poem on one unified subject.[143] This accomplished, he says "I could then show my Arab brethren the necessity to follow the methods used by Western nations in their poetry..."[144] The innovations he introduced were innovations in the art of description and in the poetic image, as well as in the narrative.[145] "In this way," he says, "I prepared the way for the new poetry in [literary] circles which were then quite restricted and which subsequently started to widen [their horizons] even more than I anticipated."[146] He then goes on to say that now, even at an old age, he still wants poets to innovate. He declares that it does not distress him that some innovators do not hold to what linguists call correct, nor does it anger him that there is a great deal of immaturity in their meanings, for he is quite convinced that the Arabic language will eventually become adequate for all sorts of expressions.[147]

This hope he gives for poetry shows a deep understanding for the secret of the development of art. His greatest wish had always been to convince the fossilised traditionalists that the Arabic language was the mother of all languages and had the capacity to suit the changing times.[148]

Muṭrān himself enjoyed a superbly wide vocabulary. His diction and phraseology are quite sellective, although he could be pedantic at times, (see the many absurd rhymes in his long poem "Nairūn"). Often there is a tendency to use less familiar words, without however causing much shock to the reader.[149] One can feel the mastery of expression, well entrenched in Classical strength and precision, without being familiar and easily predictable. Muṭrān's habit of working hard on his poems and revising them over and over again gave them added strength, but less flow and spontaneity. It is unfortunate that Egyptian poets of the following generation were not able to benefit by Muṭrān's precision, strength and terseness of phraseology, for even as early as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Shukri, a weakness of sentence formation is noticeable, which can also be detected in the poetry of Muṭrān's most loyal admirer, Aḥmad Zaki Abū Shādi. Other poets of Abū Shādi's generation, such as Nāji for example, did not benefit by Muṭrān's capacity of economy and balance, for their poetry suffered from dilution and flabbiness. One achievement of Muṭrān's which became an established element in modern poetry was the unity of a poem. Early in his life he began to attack the lack of unity in the traditional poem.[150] In some of his narratives, he was able to achieve an organic unity, in which events followed each other to a climax, but in his other poetry he succeeded in concentrating his effort on one theme and one flow of emotions in the poem, keeping to a harmonious continuity of thought and feeling.[151]

Muṭrān, moreover, was conscious of the element of truth in poetry and of the necessity for poetry to reflect its own era.[151] Except in his poems of occasion where a line of exaggerated praise is often blurred and

reminiscent of Muṭrān's hopeless attitude of compromise, his poetry is sincere and serious.

From what has been said it is clear that Muṭrān's Romantic tendencies were offset to an extent by his Classical balance, by too much deliberation and by an occasional tepidity of tone and emotion. He was not able, therefore, to generate a current of Romanticism in Arabic poetry, but his poetry had given the first signs of basic change and heralded the Romantic trend through his immense interest in nature, his choice of Romantic themes in his narratives and the open invitation he laid to experimentation and a further exploration of new themes and attitudes.

Moreover, the age in which Muṭrān started his experimental poetry, (the end of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth) was not yet ripefor the advent of such a current in the Arab world. In the first place, although the Arab poets' major interest in Western poetry up to that time and a little later, had been centred mainly on Western Romantic poets, both French and English,[152] their readings in Western Romantic poetry had not really matured enough and had not been properly assimilated. In the second place, the spirit of the age, which was curious and adventurous but neither truly rebellious nor tragically involved with events and social change, was not yet in need of the release of such a current. In the third place, Arabic poetry itself, from a purely artistic point of view, might have resisted such an early movement, even if a good poet, through a special personal situation, had tried to generate it. For the classical poetry, newly rediscovered and staunchly re-established as a genre par excellence, together with the neo-Classical poetry which was then at the height of its glory, were so deeply entrenched that any drastic deviation from their spirit and structure at such an early date would have been strongly resisted by the poetic tools themselves as well as by the reading public.[153] Tools destructive to such entrenchments had to be handled carefully and administered gradually. This is why the real beginning of true Romantic

literature in Arabic appeared in two separate fields both removed from the immediate poetic situation in the Middle East. The first field was al-Mahjar, whose remoteness in place gave courage and opportunity for change and experimentation as will be discussed later; and the second field instigated the Romantic tone through the highly emotional prose of Muṣṭafa Luṭfi al-Manfalūṭi (1875-1924) and other prose writers of the second and third decades of this century. Prose had been a highly experimental literary medium in the nineteenth century, as has been explained above, and it was easy to embark on any adventure in it even at a very early date.

To sum up his achievement, one can say that Muṭrān, in spite of his important contribution to the poetic genre at the beginning of the century, did little to add any revivifying warmth of feeling to the poetry of his time. In his work a wider range of interest, power of imagination and a certain originality appear. The element of 'imagination' was so strong in his poetry that it is safe to say that he laid the basis of much of the imaginative work produced in the twenties and thirties at the hands of the Apollo group of Romantic poets and others. He was precocious in early defining his proper aims and in his discovery of a new field of poetic experience. What is dramatic about his experiment is not the poetry itself but the courage of his conscious attempt to undertake the double task of seeking continuities with an Arab literary past while moving towards untouched fields at an age of strongly entrenched traditions.

Muṭrān had taken the lead in the move towards several aspects of innovation but had stayed all his life at the periphery of his own experiment. His greatest and most original contribution to Arabic poetry was rendered at the beginning of his career. Later on, Muṭrān participated in the changing poetical scene rather moderately, his poetry keeping to a more or less even level of creativity. He must be remembered, however, as the herald of a new awareness in Arabic poetry, despite the fact that he was too mild in the application of his theory[154] and was therefore not

fully able to project his argument with force. His long narrative poems, which were an event in their time, left no permanent impact due to their dramatic tepidity and structural ruggedness.

SECTION 3 : EARLY INTEREST IN NEW IDEAS AND FORMS

Before Mutrān introduced the bulk of his ideas on poetry, a Palestinian writer, Rauḥi al-Khālidi, (b. 1864), wrote a series of articles in al-Hilāl magazine entitled "Tārīkh ʿIlm al-Adab ʿind al-Ifranj wa 'l- ʿArab, wa Victor Hugo". In this long series, extending over two and a half years,[155] and twenty seven chapters, he perused the history of Arabic and Western literatures trying to show the influence of the former on the latter. A modern reader, going through his writings, will no doubt find them rather too simple and not devoid of mistakes. However, in 1902-1903 when he wrote them, Arab readers were nearly completely out of touch with Western literature and Western literary concepts, and his essays were extremely popular.[156] An important subject with which these essays dealt and which is of particular interest to this work was the development of the Romantic current in Western literature. Reading him now, one feels that Rauḥi al-Khālidı was the first Arab writer to introduce the concepts of the Romantic school and to compare them with Classical concepts. Rauḥi al-Khālidı was the Ottoman consul in Bourdeaux for some time,[157] and this gave him an opportunity to come into direct touch with French and apparently other Western literatures. It is not important for this work to try to argue with al-Khālidi's ideas and general description of literary currents and developments. What is important, is to try to visualise the effect of his writings on the generation of Arab readers at the turn of the century. He writes describing Romanticism: "The writings of German men of letters in this /Romantic/ style was prompted by an emotional urge and stemmed from the heart."[158] These writers, he says, wrote in the vernacular,[159] and embodied all that

could stir an emotional reaction. They also stuck to a simple style and expression.[160] Of Lamartine he says, "He was the first to introduce a change in form, writing a new kind of musical (lyrical) poetry. His volume of verse contained poems written in the glorification of God, and showing a great involvement in love; [some were poems of] gentle meditations and had wonderful descriptions of the phenomena of the universe and the world of nature."[161] Speaking of Victor Hugo, he says "He founded the Romantic school, and abandoned the metaphors of the scholastic style and its old similies. Moreover, he did not model his writings on his predecessors, but resorted to a natural (spontaneous) style and to an [expression] of inner feelings."[162] Thus the Romantic link between the emotions and the creative energy in a poet is made quite clear to readers. The reader's attention is also drawn to the element of simplicity in the Romantic style, and to the fact that a change in the poetic sensibility entailed a change in style and vice versa. On this he gave also the example of al-Mutanabbi and al-Ma'arri and those who wrote in their style and who had, therefore, "deviated from the ways of the Arabs."[163] The old school (he also called it the scholastic school) depended on a terse arrangement of words and on the use of all kinds of decorative rhetoric.[164] The whole discussion of al-Khālidi is an interesting testimony to the method of writing and the appreciation and evaluation of works of literature of which enlightened writers were capable at that time, so early in the century. It is one of the first works written on comparative literature in modern Arabic. One of the most interesting points one notices is the fact that al-Khālidi is completely free from feelings of unproportional admiration to Western works of literature. He does not find it necessary to make a mystery of that literature, although he is not disrespectful of it. He takes it all naturally and with charming simplicity.[165]

Another author, contemporaneous with al-Khālidi, was Sulaimān al-Bustāni, (1856-1925), a Lebanese poet, writer and statesman. He participated

in both the field of experimental poetry and the field of criticism. In 1904, after ten years of strenuous work,[166] he published a translation of the whole of the Iliad in eleven thousand verses. He had been able, in the process of translation, to experiment on variations of rhyme, metre and the poetic genre (such as dubait, muwashshah, etc.). His experiment, however, was not spectacular from a poetic point of view,[167] the poetry showing signs of resistance to expressions in the text foreign to Arabic thought, as well as a lack of poetic heights. He did not really abandon the Classical heritage as a whole and did not absorb fully the spirit of the work he was translating, being under the influence of the Arabic poetical spirit carried on in the Classical expression and diction. But the importance of his work lies in the courage of his attempt and in its novelty, for it was "the first sustained attempt to present a masterpiece of Classical literature in a form which the Arab world could assimilate."[168]

More beneficial to the reader than the translation were perhaps the c. two hundred pages of introduction with which he prefaced this work. Together with Rauḥi al-Khālidi's book, this long introduction is possibly the first modern work to be published on literary criticism with a deep comparative view on Western literature. Aside from al-Bustāni's discussion on Homer, his Iliad and his importance in the history of literature, he discussed other poetic matters, such as the nature of epic poetry and the reasons why the Arabs did not write epic poetry, a most interesting and enlightening discussion.[169] He also treated of the method of poetic translation and several other themes, some of them decidedly modern and fresh.[170]

FOOTNOTES

1. ʿAbbūd, Ruʾūs, p.292.

2. Al-Mukhtār min Shiʿr Shauqi, collected by an Egyptian man of letters, Cairo, [1924?] p.181, quoting al-Manfalūṭi.

3. ʿAbbūd, Ruʾus, p.294.

4. Haikal in the introduction to Al-Shauqiyyāt, Cairo, n.d. I, ف.

5. S. Ḍaif, op.cit., pp.110-1 and Shauqi, Shāʿir al-ʿAṣr al-Ḥadīth, Cairo, 1953, pp.10-1 & 16-8.

6. Ibid., p.13.

7. See Shauqi's introduction to the first edition of his own diwan Al-Shauqiyyāt 1888-1898, Cairo, 1898, pp.17-21.

8. See Ḍaif, Shauqi, pp.23-8.

9. He was sent there by the British authorities at the outbreak of the first World War in 1914 because of his connection with the deposed Khedive ʿAbbās, his former patron, and stayed there until the end of the war. Ḍaif, Al-Adab al-ʿArabi, p.112.

10. Ibid., p.113.

11. Apollo, December, 1932, p.419.

12. For Ḍaif's comment see Shauqi, pp.97-100; for Mandūr's comment on him see Al-Shiʿr al-Misri, I, 2-3; for Karam's comment see Al-Ramziyyah, p.114 and "Madkhal", pp.232 & 240.

13. See al-ʿAqqād's two chapters on Shauqi, "Shauqi fi 'l-Mīzān" in Al-Dīwān, Kitāb fi 'l-Naqd wa 'l-Adab, Cairo, April-February, 1921, in two Vols.; I, 3-45 & II, 33-78. Al-Dīwān was written in collaboration with I.A. al-Māzini who wrote, however, on other authors. See also al-ʿAqqād's Sāʿāt baina 'l-Kutub, third edition, Cairo, 1950, pp.116-9 & 137-9; also Shuʿarāʾ Misr, pp.156-88.

14. See M.H. Shaukat in Al-Masrahiyyah fī Shiʿr Shauqi, Cairo, 1947, for his defence of Shauqi's traditionalism and its compatibility with the norms of the age which had not changed much, pp.31-2.

15. Shuʿarāʾ Miṣr, pp.168-70; Sāʿāt, pp.117-9.

16. Ḥāfiẓ wa Shauqi, Cairo, 1933, pp.191-2, & 195.

17. Ibid., pp.192-4.

18. Ibid., pp.115-27, & 200-6.

19. Ibid., pp.195-6.

20. See for example the Palestinian writer Isʿāf al-Nashāshībi, Al-ʿArabiyyah wa Shāʿiruha 'l-Akbar, published in pamphlet form at Cairo in 1928; originally a speech delivered at the celebration in honour of Shauqi in 1927; see especially pp.22-31.

21. See for example the special issue of the Apollo magazine on Shauqi, December, 1932.

22. Shuʿarāʾ Miṣr, p.171.

23. Although the special features of the traditional form in Arabic poetry (the two hemistich and the monorhyme) has been discussed by writers on the subject like Ibrāhīm Anīs in Mūsīqā 'l-Shiʿr, 3rd edition, Cairo, 1965, and Nāzik al-Malāʾikah in Qadāyā 'l-Shiʿr al-Muʿāṣir, Beirut, 1962, especially pp.199-227, and others, the influenc of this special form on context in the Classical poetry has not been fully explored.

24. Writers like M. ʿAṭā in Khalīl Muṭrān, Cairo, 1959, p.49, and others.

25. See the interesting discussion written by Ḍaif in Shauqi, pp.47-9.

26. Haikal in the introduction to Al-Shauqiyyāt, I, ؍ , discusses his possession of an emotional language effective on the Arabs.

27. "Maʿālim al-Thaurah al-Ūlā ʿInd al-ʿAqqād", Dirāsāt ʿArabiyyah magazine, Beirut, December, 1966, p.61; see also p.84.

28. ʿAbbūd, Ruʾūs, p.292.

29. See Karam, "Madkhal", p.239; see also an essay by Iḥsān ʿAbbās entitled "Al-Ṣūrah fī Shiʿr Shauqi", in Mahrajān Shauqi wa Ḥāfiẓ, Khartum 1958, pp.9-16, in which he makes a link between Shauqi's imagery which often seeks to combine two opposing objects and his social and public attitude which ʿAbbās believes to be bent on compromise. Although this is a sophisticated interpretation that might have a good amount of truth in it, it remains true that ʿAbbās overlooks the most important fact concerning this use of imagery, for the combination of opposite images is a basic trait in Classical Arabic poetry; see what Luṭfi ʿAbd al-Badīʿ says on the subject in his essay, "Al-Takāmul fi 'l-Qaṣīdah al-ʿArabiyyah", Ilā Ṭāhā Ḥusain, ed. by A. Badawi, a book of essays by several authors presented to Ṭ. Ḥusain on his seventieth birthday, Cairo, 1962; ʿAbd al-Badīʿ quotes al-Jurjāni to substantiate his idea, p.173.

30. For a single example see his poem "Nakbat Dimashq", Al-Shauqiyyāt, II, 88-91.

31. For a description of Shauqi's daily life and its concentration on a world of men see Apollo magazine, December, 1932, p.317; see also Sāmi 'l-Dahhān Shāʿir al-Shaʿb, Cairo, 1953, pp.41-4 for a description of the life of Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm, Shauqi's contemporary.

32. See for example Al-Shauqiyyāt, II, "Bāb al-Nasīb"; some of these poems are famous such as "Khadaʿūhā", p.139; "Muḍnāka Jafāhu Marqaduhu", pp.152-3; "ʿAllāmūhu kaifa Yajfū, fa Jafā", p.163; "Yā Nāʿiman Raqadat Jufūnuh", p.174; "Marqaṣ", p.13 and the overture to his famous poem, "Zaḥlah", pp.224-5.

33. A cultivated woman like May Ziyādah was able to arouse very noble sentiments in a poet like Ismāʿīl Ṣabri, but that was an unusual thing to happen.

34. See in Maṣraʿ Kilyūbatrah, Cairo, 1929, his lyrical poem "Ana Anṭunyō wa Anṭunyō Ana", pp.43-5; and see in Majnūn Laylā, Cairo, n.d. his several lyrical poems, "Sajā al-Lailu", pp.17-8; "Laylā Munādin Daʿā Laylā", p.43; "Jabal al-Tūbād", p.114 and others.

35. ʿAbbūd, Dimaqs wa Urjuwān, second edition, Beirut, 1964, pp.92-3.

36. Ibid., p.95.

37. Modern folk-lore in Arabic still abounds with nostalgia.

38. ʿAbbūd, ibid., pp.86-98.

39. For more details on Shauqi's poetry of occasion see Ḍaif, Shauqi, pp.162-77.

40. Muḥammad Ṣabri made a special research and found about 130 poems not included in his diwans. He collected them from manuscripts and newspapers. However, not all of them are verified. They are collected in two volumes called Al-Shauqiyyāt al-Majhūlah, Cairo, 1961. Most of their poetry is inferior to Shauqi's recognised poetry.

41. ʿAbbūd, Dimaqs, p.87.

42. Karam, "Madkhal", p.245.

43. See for example the chapter by S. Dahhān on the kinds of poetry he wrote, Shāʿir al-Shaʿb, pp.79-102, which is an enumeration of his themes; see also R. Masīḥah, Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm, al-Shāʿir al-Siyāsi, Cairo, 1947, which also paraphrases his poetry; also K. Jumʿah, Ḥāfiz Ibrāhīm, mā lahū wa mā ʿalaihi, Cairo, 1959, pp.93-316; Jumʿah's assessment of novelty in his poetry concentrates only on themic innovations, see especially ibid., pp.305-16; J.A. Arberry, in his valuable appraisal of Ḥāfiẓ, also concentrated on the context of the poet's work, but Arberry's study was concentrated on the reaction of Moslem poets to the "humiliating situation of their people and what they said in reminiscences of past glory and as spokesmen of the liberation to come." See Aspects of Islamic Civilization, London, 1964, p.359, for the quotation; see also the whole section on Ḥāfiẓ, pp.359-66.

44. See the diversity of his social and public themes (charity projects, openings of educational institutions especially for girls, orphanages, etc.) in Dīwān Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm, edited by Aḥmad al-Zain, Aḥmad Amīn, and Ibrāhīm al-Abyāri, second edition, Cairo, 1939, the chapter entitled "Al-Ijtimāʿiyyāt", I, 250-318, et passim.

45. See Masīḥah, op.cit., pp.69-71; Dahhān, Shāʿir al-Shaʿb, p.97.

46. See a quotation by him in Jumʿah, op.cit., p.173; see also the comment of A. Sanad al-Jundi, Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm, Shāʿir al-Nīl, Cairo, 1959, pp.103 & 105.

47. Such as his poem on the earthquake of Messina in 1908, Dīwān Ḥāfiẓ, I, 215-20; his elegy on Tolstoy in 1910, II, 164-7, etc.

48. Jumʿah, loc.cit.; on his association with Muḥammad ʿAbdū see S. Dahhān, Shāʿir al-Shaʿb, pp.30-6 and other references.

49. Such poems as his famous "qāfiyyah" delivered at the Girls' School in Port Said, Dīwān Ḥāfiẓ, I, 279-83, and his poem on the Arabic language, written from a patriotic point of view, ibid., pp.253-5.

50. On his flow of emotion in poetry see Karam, loc.cit.

51. On the appeal of his poetic diction see A. Sanad al-Jundi, op.cit., pp.103 & 105.

52. On the suitability of his diction to the listeners see Ṭāha Ḥusain, Ḥāfiẓ wa Shauqi, pp.152-3.

53. Dīwān Ḥāfiẓ, I, 227-8; for more examples see his very vivid description of the Messina earthquake, ibid., especially pp.216-8, N.B. this concise and poignant verse (p.216):

خسفت ثم اغرقت ثم عادت قضي الامر كله في ثوانـــي

see also another good example in which he describes a fire at Mait Ghamr, a town in Egypt; the fire lasted eight days; ibid., pp.250-2.

54. Compare the above-mentioned poems with the affected poem on a fire which broke out at a friend's house, ibid., p.233.

55. Dīwān Ḥāfiẓ, I, 257.

56. Ibid. The whole poem is interesting from this aspect.

57. Ibid., II, 122.

58. Dahhān, however, finds it so, Shā'ir al-Sha'b, p.26; A. Sanad al-Jundi discusses what he calls "Fukāhah" in the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ, however, he understands it to be mere jesting, and the subtle, often bitter irony of the poet completely eludes him; see op.cit., pp.190-7; Jum'ah also discusses his humorous verse, op.cit., pp.288-300, but mentions the more comical verse regarding it also as a themic variation. The poet's irony as a technique in serious, even tragic poetry, also eludes him. For poems in which Hāfiz jests and jokes with his friends see Dīwān Hāfiz, the chapter on "Al-Ikhwāniyyāt", I, 162-204, in which there are several poems of this kind.

59. Dīwān Hāfiz, II, 133.

60. Ibid., p.20; see also ibid., I, 316 the first six lines.

61. Ibid., pp.205-6.

62. On his life see A. Sanad al-Jundi, op.cit., pp.15-46, especially pp.35-7, Dahhān, Shā'ir al-Sha'b, pp.22-9 especially p.29, and other references.

63. See his elegies on Muḥammad 'Abdū, Dīwān Hāfiz, II, 144 the third verse, and p.203 the first fifteen lines; see also his elegy on Zaidān, ibid., p.184, etc.; however, this is different from Shauqi's nostalgia, see 'Abbūd, Dimaqs, pp.94-7.

64. Dīwān Hāfiz, II, 203.

65. For his education see Dahhān, Shā'ir al-Sha'b, p.12 where he says that his education was based on Al-Wasīlah al-Adabiyyah; see also Jum'ah, op.cit., pp.30-9, where he exaggerates the extent of his education; see Ṭāhā Ḥusain, Hāfiz wa Shauqi, pp.196-7 & 210 on the deficiency of his culture.

67. T.A. al-Tanāḥi, Ḥayāt Muṭrān, Cairo, 1965, p.37; Karam, "Madkhal", p.246.

68. Ibid., Tanāḥi, op.cit., p.44.

69. Ibid.

70. Dīwān al-Khalīl, 4 volumes, third edition, Beirut, 1967, I, 15.

71. See ibid., the preface to the poem.

72. Among these was Ibrāhīm al-Yāziji, Muṭrān's teacher; see an account on him in al-Maqdisi, Ittijāhāt, pp.106-9.

73. Tanāḥi, op.cit., pp.45-6.

74. See Karam's description of his alienation, "Madkhal", p.248.

75. See Mandūr, Khalīl Muṭrān, Cairo, 1954, pp.3-7.

76. Tanāḥi has written a full biography of Muṭrān's life and love, but aside from his personal knowledge of the poet, there is little evidence shown in the book.

77. M. Mandūr, Al-Shi'r al-Misri, II, 3.

78. R. Khouri in his introduction to Al-Tughāt, an anthology of some of K. Muṭrān's poems edited by him, Beirut, 1949, p.3; Salāmah Mūsā, "Khalīl Muṭrān", Al-Hilāl, June, 1924, Vol.32, ix, 963; A.Z. Abū Shādi, Qaḍāyā 'l-Shi'r al-Mu'āṣir, Cairo, 1959, p.57.

79. On his influence on these three poets see Maḥmūd Amīn al-'Ālim, "Al-Shi'r al-Miṣri 'l-Ḥadīth", Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.16.

80. See Abū Shādi's diwans Al-Shafaq al-Bāki, Cairo, 1927, p.1236, and Andā' al-Fajr, second edition, Cairo, 1934, pp.52-3, 110, 113, 117, etc.; see also his elegy on him in Min al-Samā', New York, 1949, pp.130-6; see also his book of essays Asdā' al-Hayāt, second edition, Alexandria, 1937, pp.6-25; etc.

81. S. Jaudat, Ibrāhīm Nāji, Cairo, 1960, pp.144-5; N.A. Fu'ād, Nāji al-Shā'ir, Cairo, 1954, pp.12-4; see also Abū Shādi's diwan, Aṭyāf al-Rabī', Cairo, 1933, for an essay by Nāji, p. ب, in which he asserts that Muṭrān is the poet who opened the eyes of the young poets to "the light /of knowledge/...and sowed the seeds" of modern poetry.

82. See 'Aṭā, op.cit., p.70 for quotations from K. Shaybūb on this point.

83. A. Kūrāni as quoted by Adham, "Khalīl Muṭrān, Shā'ir al-'Arabiyyah 'l-Ibdā'i-Nash'at al-Tayyār al-Ibdā'i fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi", Al-Muqtaṭaf, May, 1939, Vol.,94, v, 611.

84. Adham, "Khalīl Muṭrān, Shā'ir al-'Arabiyyah al-Ibdā'i-Al-'Aṣr wa 'l-Rajul", ibid., March, 1939, Vol.94, iii, 296.

85. See ibid., pp.296-7.

86. See ibid., the whole essay, pp.295-307.

87. Adham, "Khalīl Muṭrān. Shā'ir al-'Arabiyyah al-Ibdā'i - Al-Ṭaur al-Thālith min Ḥayāt Muṭrān", ibid., August, 1939, Vol.95, iii, 320-3.

88. J. Ramādi, Khalīl Muṭrān, Shā'ir al-Aqṭār al-'Arabiyyah, Cairo, [c1960], pp.56-7.

89. A. Dusūqi, Jamā'at Apollo wa Atharuhā fi 'l-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth, Cairo, 1960, p.76.

90. See M. Mandūr's book, Khalīl Muṭrān, p.11.

91. Op.cit., pp.79, 81 & 377-31.

92. "Haul Maqāl (Khalīl Muṭrān)", Al-Muqtaṭaf, April, 1939, Vol.94, iv, 495; see also his essay, "Ra'yī fi 'l-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth", ibid., May, 1939, Vol.94, v, 545-52, in which he recounts his Arabic influences, probably to prove that he was not influenced by Muṭrān; see also his essay, "Al-Shi'r wa 'l-Thaqāfah", ibid., June, 1939, Vol.95, i, 33-40 in which he recounts his Western influences.

93. Shu'arā' Misr, p.199.

94. Ibid.

95. Ibid., pp.199-200 (quotation on p.200); see Mandūr, Al-Shi'r al-Miṣri, I, 37-8, where he throws doubts on al-'Aqqād's statement concerning both their Classical and Western education.

96. Dīwān al-Khalīl, third edition, Beirut, 1967, I, 8.

97. Ibid., p.9.

98. Quoted by Adham in "Khalīl Muṭrān, Shā'ir al-'Arabiyyah al-Ibdā'i - Al-'Aṣr wa 'l-Rajul", p.295, and by Ramādi, op.cit., p.300, to have been published in Al-Majallah al-Miṣriyyah, July, 1900, p.85.

99. His single resort to write a sort of poetic prose was his elegy entitled "Kalimāt Asaf", Dīwān al-Khalīl, I, 294-6; however, this is a lame and unsuccessful attempt, very prosaic and diluted, but showing, nevertheless, the marks of Western influences.

100. Among which are "Wafā'", ibid., pp.105-10; "Al-'Iqāb", ibid., pp.112-7; "Finjān Qahwah", ibid., 148-54; "Fatāt al-Jabal al-Aswad", ibid., pp. 179-83; "Al-Janīn al-Shahīd", ibid., pp.223-45; and "Gharām Ṭiflain", ibid., pp.245-8.

101. Maqdisi, op.cit., p.391n.; see Khouri's poem "Al-Rummān wa 'l-'Innāb", 'Abbūd, Ruwwād, pp.91-2.

102. Maqdisi, op.cit., p.391; see Ramādi, Muṭrān, pp.243-7.

103. Ibid., p.20; Adham, "Khalīl Muṭrān, Shā'ir al-'Arabiyyah al-Ibdā'i - Al-Ṭaur al-Awwal min Ḥayāt Muṭrān", Al-Muqtaṭaf, June, 1939, Vol.95, i, 91.

104. See his introduction to his diwan, p.8 in which he says that he had written first according to the ancients, then, disgusted, left off writing poetry altogether until he was able to innovate.

105. See 'Īsā Sābā, Shu'rā' al-Qiṣṣah wa 'l-Waṣf fī Lubnān, Beirut, 1961, for numerous examples of narrative poetry written by Lebanese poets.

106. See a list of these by Maqdisi, op.cit., pp.392-3.

107. Dīwān Shukri, edited by Nuqūla Yūsuf, Alexandria, 1960, being a collection of all Shukri's diwans, pp.205-6.

108. See above footnote 92 for what Shukri says about his own poetic education.

109. "Nash'at al-Ittijāh al-Ibdā'i fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi", pp.296, 300, 302, 306 et passim.

110. Ibid., p.300.

111. See for example his poems "Al-Masā'", Dīwān al-Khalīl, I, 144-6; "Mushākāh Baini wa Baina 'l-Badr", ibid., 29-30; "Al-Asad al-Bāki", ibid., II, 17-9; "Min Gharīb ilā 'Uṣfūrah Mughtaribah", ibid., pp.21-30.

112. A trait noticed also by other writers on him; see Adham, "Ṣinā't Muṭrān al-Fanniyyah", p.547; Ḍaif, Al-Adab al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āṣir fī Miṣr, p.124.

113. See Iḥsān 'Abbās, Fann al-Shi'r, Beirut, 1959, pp.46-9 on the idea of Classical balance in "'amūd al-Shi'r".

114. See Adham, "Al-Khayāl fi 'l-Shi'r wa Manzilatuhu fī Shā'iriyyat Muṭrān", Al-Muqtaṭaf, February, 1940, Vol.96, ii, 160.

114a. Dīwān al-Khalīl, II, 186-7.

115. On Gibrān's involvement with nature see K. Ḥāwi, op.cit., pp.167, 206, 211, etc.

116. Adham, loc.cit.; see also his other essay, "Al-'Āṭifah wa 'l-Fikrah fi 'l-Shi'r wa Manzilatuhumā fī Shi'r Muṭrān", Al-Muqtaṭaf, March, 1940, Vol.96, iii, 306 and 310-1.

117. See below, Chapter IV.

118. Op.cit., p.63; see also Adham, "Khalīl Muṭrān, Shā'ir al-Aqṭār al-'Arabiyyah - Al-'Aṣr wa 'l-Rajul", p.300.

119. See Adham's essay, "Khalīl Muṭrān, Shā'ir al-'Arabiyyah al-Ibdā'i - Al-Ṭaur al-Awwal min Ḥayāt Muṭrān", p.87 n.

120. Karam, "Madkhal", p.246.

121. Khalīl Muṭrān, p.3.

122. Ibid., p.12.

123. Ibid., p.13.

124. Ibid.

125. Ibid.

126. Ibid., pp.15 & 18.

127. Ibid., p.17.

128. Ibid.

129. Ibid., pp.28-9; Karam, "Madkhal", p.249.

130. See his poem "Ḥikāyat ʿĀshiqain", Dīwān al-Khalīl, I, pp.185-222 which is regarded as an interpretation of his own story; see Mandūr, loc.cit., Tanāḥi, op.cit., pp.125-54.

131. Dīwān al-Khalīl, I, 120-3.

132. Ibid., III, 50-73.

133. Ibid., I, 121.

134. Ibid., III, 69.

135. "Madkhal", loc.cit.

136. Adham agrees to this, see "Ṣinā'at Muṭrān al-Fanniyyah", Al-Muqtaṭaf, May, 1940, Vol.96, v, 555.

137. See for example the final lines of "Nairūn" and "Maqtal Buzrujumuhr".

138. "Al-Tajdīd fi 'l-Shi'r", Al-Hilāl, November, 1933, Vol.42, i, 10, see also pp.10-2.

139. Ibid.

140. Ibid. He believed that the poetic and aesthetic nature of people is slow to change; see his introduction to Abū Shādi's Aṭyāf al-Rabī', p. ا , where he states this and comments on the particular conservative nature of the Arabs.

141. "Al-Tajdīd fi 'l-Shi'r", loc.cit.

142. Karam, "Madkhal", p.248.

143. Dīwān al-Khalīl, III, 48.

144. Ibid.

145. "Al-Tajdīd fi 'l-Shi'r", loc.cit.

146. Ibid.

147. Ibid., pp.10-1.

148. See his preface to the second volume of Dīwān al-Khalīl.

149. There is, however, a slight difficulty in assimilating quickly much of his poetry if a reader's taste had been nourished primarily on Classical literature. This difficulty was noticed by al-Manfalūṭi who said, "There is a foreign motif /in his poetry/, like a piece of coal among fine diamonds"; quoted by al-ʿAqqād in his lecture, "Dhikrayāt al-Khalīl", Mahrajān Khalīl Muṭrān, High Council for Arts and Literature, Cairo, 1960, p.13. Al-ʿAqqād described as a weakness in style resulting from too much improvisation in phraseology. However, although this improvisation lies at the basis of the unfamiliarity of some of his poetry, it does not result in any weakness of style.

150. Quoted by Adham, "Al-Ittijāh al-Ibdā'i fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi", p.293, from Al-Majallah al-Miṣriyyah, June 16, 1900, pp.42-4.

151. See his article, "Al-Tajdīd fi 'l-Shi'r", where he discusses what he seeks in literature, both prose and poetry, pp.11-2.

152. On Shauqi's preference for French Romantics, see Ḍaif, Shauqi, pp.97-8 Ṭāhā Ḥusain, Ḥāfiz wa Shauqi, pp.200-2; on Muṭrān's interest in the French Romantic poets see Ramādi, Muṭrān, pp.247-53; Adham, "Khalīl Muṭrān, Shā'ir al-'Arabiyyah al-Ibdā'i - Al-Ṭaur al-Awwal min Ḥayāt Muṭrān", Muqtaṭaf, June, 1939, Vol.95, i, 91; on the influence of the English Romantics on Shukri, see Adham, ibid., "Al-'Aṣr wa 'l-Rajul", March, 1939, Vol.94, iii, 306; see also what Shukri wrote about his own education in English Romantic poetry and the influence of Shelley and Byron on him, "Al-Shi'r wa 'l-Thaqāfah", Muqtaṭaf, June, 1939, Vol.95, i, 34; on the influence of French Romantic poetry /in translation, as will be seen in the chapter on him/, on al-Shābbi, the Tunisian Romantic poet, see S. Jaudat, op.cit., p.145; etc.

153. Arab poets have often combined the two trends: the Classical and the Romantic, the strong entrenchments of form and methods in Arabic poetry standing in the way of full Romantic liberation; see I. ʿAbbās, Fann al-Shiʿr, pp.43-4 for an interpretation of Western critical ideas on the combination of Classicism and Romanticism in the same author.

154. Aside from his article "Al-Tajdīd fi 'l-Shiʿr", see also another article by him with the same title in Al-Risālah, No.616, April, 23rd, 1945, pp.427-3.

155. He began writing in November, 1902 and finished in July, 1904. His essays were anonymous. Later on, he published them in a book form in 1904, and by 1912 the second edition was out.

156. At the opening of the second year the editors of Al-Hilāl wrote in a footnote: "We were decided to suspend these articles after the first year...but many readers in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Persia, India, Algeria and Tunisia wrote asking us to continue publishing them, showing great admiration for the painstaking research which the writer had done," Al-Hilāl, October, 1903, Vol.12, i, p.38 n.

157. Raʾif al-Khouri, Al-Fikr al-ʿArabi l-Ḥadīth, p.112 n.

158. "Tārīkh ʿIlm al-Adab ʿInd al-Ifranj wa 'l-ʿArab - Al-Ṭarīqah l-Rūmānsiyyah ʿInd al-Almān wa 'l-Firansāwiyyīn", Al-Hilāl, February, 1904, Vol.12, ix, 266.

159. Ibid.

160. Ibid.

161. Ibid., p.274.

162. Ibid., " Ẓuhūr Victor Hugo", Al-Hilāl, April, 1904, Vol.12, xiii, 429.

163. Ibid.

164. Ibid., "Al-Ṭarīqah l-Rūmānsiyyah ʿInd al-Almān wa 'l-Firansāwiyyīn", p.268.

165. For more on him see Isḥāq Mūsā l-Ḥusaini, Al-Naqd al-ʿArabi l-Muʿāṣir fi 'l-Rubʿ al-Awwal min al-Qarn al-ʿIshrīn, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1967; see pp.33-51 where he summarises al-Khālidi's ideas on comparative literature; see also Najm, "Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah", pp.318-9; A.Z. Abū Shādi, Aṣdāʾ al-Ḥayāt, p.37 et seq.

166. Zaidān, Tārīkh, IV, 229; U. Farrūkh, Arbaʿat Udabāʾ Muʿāṣirūn, Beirut, 1944, p.28, where he praises the formidable work of al-Bustāni.

167. On Bustāni's poetic gift see ibid., pp.29-30 in which he shows his weakness as a poet; al-Maqdisi, however, finds his work "a great text worthy of reading by lovers of literature", Ittijāhāt, p.372.

168. "Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature, I, The Nineteenth Century", B.S.O.A.S., 1926-1928, Vol.IV, iv, 751.

169. See J. Hāshim, Sulaimān al-Bustāni wa 'l-Ilyādhah, Beirut, 1960, pp.89-90, for a summary of Bustāni's ideas on why Arabs did not translate the Iliad; see also pp.96-127 for a summary of Bustāni's ideas on comparative literature and a discussion on them. See also al-Bustāni's Ilyādhat Hūmīrus, Cairo, 1904, pp.107 et seq. for his first hand discussion on the problem of epic poetry and the translation of the Iliad into Arabic.

170. See for example his discussion on the nature of the creative process and how the poet can visualise the whole poem at once, with all its various elements, a most modern idea, Ilyādhat Hūmīrus, pp.89-90.

CHAPTER II

ARABIC POETRY IN THE AMERICAS

The general literary activity in Egypt was to culminate in the rise of a movement aiming at liberating poetry from many of the neo-Classical qualities which were being strongly established there. This was the movement of the Diwan Group, a group of three poets, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Shukri, ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Māzini and ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād, who sought to make poetry the voice of the human heart and liberate it from rhetoric and trivialities. The achievements and failures of these poets will be discussed in the next chapter. But before these poets began their campaign a similar but independent movement in Arabic poetry had been taking place in what the Arab writers call "Al-Mahjar al-Amrīki", i.e. in the United States and Latin America, by Arab immigrant poets there. Al-Mahjar poetic movement proved to be more successful and influential. The two movements do not seem to have been aware of each other except at a later stage of their development when their basic principles had already been established. This is significant of the needs which poetry had at that time and of the simultaneous reactions which Arab poets and writers on poetry showed as soon as contact with foreign fields was established. For the two movements were influenced directly and indirectly by Western poetry and the Western poetic concept.

But one must emphasise at the outset the basic differences in the poetry of the immigrant Arabs in the U.S.A. and that of their compatriots in South America. Two points are significant here. The first is that the poetic contribution of the Southern group is far greater in bulk than that of the Northern group. For although there were many prose writers in the South who wrote in newspapers and magazines, and delivered talks and orations, the most famous within the Southern group are poets.[1] The

second point is that, despite the abundance of poetry in the South the rebellion in form, content, diction and tone, the introduction of abstract themes, the adoption of philosophical attitudes, and the successful arrival at modern Romanticism in poetry were achieved mainly by the immigrant poets in the North, the South remaining well in the stream of traditional Arabic poetry and culture. Writers on the subject like 'Abd al-Ghani Ḥasan,[2] M. Haddārah,[3] U. Dusūqi,[4] A.K. al-Maqdisī,[5] and G. Ṣaidaḥ and others are in the habit of discussing the Mahjar poetry as one unified whole. And although some of them, such as al-Maqdisi,[6] and 'Isā 'l-Nā'ūri,[7] for example, remarked on the differences between the two groups, they did not look at al-Mahjar poetry as running in two different streams. Both of these streams were rich. The Northern one, which might include the Southern Fawzi and Shafīq al-Ma'lūf's two imaginary voyages,[8] led a new current in poetry. The Southern stream fed and enriched with a fresh and pure contribution the already established neo-Classical poetry. In their valuable book on al-Mahjar poetry,[9] Iḥsān 'Abbās and M.Y. Najm subtly evaded a discussion of the Southern contribution and simply wrote a book on the poetry of "Al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah", the famous North American literary society which led the wave of innovation in Arabic poetry in al-Mahjar. N. Sarrāj also wrote exclusively on them.[10]

The immediate heritage in Arabic poetry of all these poets is the same. Nu'aimah describes it in an article written in 1949. He says, "The mind /at home/ was closed, the /literary/ taste stale and the creative will paralysed. The poet did not dare deviate from the /order of the/ one rhyme and from the topics adopted by Arabic poetry since ancient times ..." and after describing it said, "This was the kind of literature which the emigrants carried with them to their new countries ... they also carried with them the dreary spiritual atmosphere in which they grew up."[11]

Gibrān, too, in a letter to a woman Orientalist says that Syria at the time had two maladies: traditionalism and traditions.[12] But what happened when these poets settled in their adopted countries was a different story. The Northern poets experienced a great change in their artistic output, while the Southern poets, despite the fact that, compared to the contemporary poetry that was being written at home, often showed a broader outlook and a deeper perspective, as well as a clearer vision of man and of life, nevertheless remained mild and limited in their attitude towards innovation. In form, the Classical verse of the two hemistich and the mono-rhyme remained the most prevalent, although the use of the quatrain, of shorter metres and of variations of the Muwashshaḥ type was attempted successfully. In theme, aside from the imaginary voyages of the Ma'lūf brothers mentioned above, which displayed originality and courage as well as a definite Romantic trend, the Southern poets employed much the same themes that were being employed in the contemporary poetry of the time in the Arab world. In tone, a large part of the Southern contribution, which talked of nationalism or uttered the concise, all-conclusive epigrams typical to Arabic poetry, retained the rhetorical, self-assertive, direct tone of Arabic poetry of Classical times.*

It is interesting to note the basic differences in attitude and in points of interest between the two groups, as well as the marked differences in outlook, the most flagrant of which is perhaps their different attitudes towards nationalism. For while the Northern poets tended to be universal in their outlook on the world and believed mostly in the brotherhood of man, the Southern poets were flagrantly on the side of Arab nationalism. Some writers on the subject have noted the basic differences in diction[13] and theme[14] but few of them attempted to probe into the reasons that lay behind this phenomenon.[15]

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* This should not exclude a change in tone in the same poet in the South when writing on personal matters. The private voice was heard in the poetry of several southern Mahjar poets among whom a notable poet was Ilyās Farḥāt, whose rhetoric in national poetry rang high.

Artistic as well as environmental causes seem to lie behind it, however. Artistically, the three most influential personalities in the whole Arab-American literature happened to be in the North. They are al-Rīḥānī, Gibrān and Nu'aimah.[16] These three literary personalities had the courage, the originality and the highly mixed culture (which embodied Arabic and Western literatures, as well as Islamic and Christian heritage) that could enable them to forge new ways in literature and to impose new ideas and concepts on any of their contemporaries who happened to fall under their influence. Perhaps the greatest achievement they accomplished in this respect in al-Mahjar itself was the conversion of Ilyā Abū Māḍi, the best of the Mahjar poets, from a conventional and realistic way to that contemplative, highly abstract style of his more famous poetry. This will be discussed later. The links the three men had with European and American literatures and their more sophisticated and finely tempered artistic personalities did a great deal to accomplish a thoroughly liberal attitude towards literature, considerably free from persistent traditional hindrances. Nothing as strong and deep as this characterized the Southern poets.

Environmentally, the difference between life in the United States and life in Latin America at the beginning of this century has also helped to emphasise the gap between the two groups as each of them fell under different influences. The North American way of life, with its order and material superiority,[17] its impressive impact,[18] its bustle and quick pace which Nu'aimah described as a dragon,[19] could not but draw these immigrants into its orbit and acclamatize them, quickly and forcibly, to its general spirit. Arab individualism was prone to suffer in such an atmosphere which compels the individual to an immediate compromise with its hard and unyielding demands. Moreover, the Northern poets could not help but be influenced by the talk on the ideals of liberty and the four freedoms,

as well as the value of man and his position in life: the typical concepts of Western liberalism. The United States, satiated with boon and plenty, was dominated by a general spirit of liberalism that could not fail to make its impact felt on those young immigrants who were looking, both consciously and instinctively, for new sources of knowledge and experience.

G. Ṣaidaḥ, an Arab poet of the Southern group, disagrees with this. It was our poets, he insists, who were missionaries for the spiritual message of the East.[20] They were the givers, not the recipients. Their message "had a great impact on the American media where the souls were in need of a spiritual philosophy ... to go along with the ambiguous materialistic philosophies imported from Europe."[21] He does admit that the "American environment in the North imposed its style on the habits and outer appearance of the Arab immigrants"[22] but goes on to deny emphatically that the men of letters were influenced by it in their literary output. Most of the men of letters he knew, he said, lived close to their original countries in thought and emotion.[23] One must certainly try to gain by Ṣaidaḥ's personal glimpses and by his own experience, as a poet, in the matter. But he lived in Latin America. The North, which he probably knew only to a limited extent, was different. If the contradiction between great ideals and a materialistic reality seemed incompatible and often revolting to the Arab immigrant in North America, the flagrant display of power and material superiority, of active progress, of a real grasp on life, must have furnished the challenge needed for an intellectual rebellion. Hangovers from an agricultural, poverty-stricken and oppressed background might slow the pace of those poets. A basic cultural barrier might immunize them against a true conversion. But there can be no doubt that they recognised in what they saw an advanced level of human progress and freedom with which they could not identify their own people. Moreover, if Western culture was not attainable to all,[24] it was most definitely

absorbed, in varying degrees of intensity, by the three leaders of the movement in the North. They had direct and easy access to more sophisticated examples of literary creativity. Their creative work was coloured by a new tinge which was absorbed, in varying degrees, by the other poets of the group. The ground for rebellion was fertile. Gibrān's intense rebellion at such an early date, against the clergy in his country, against traditions, against the conventional methods that suffocated creativity, could not have been achieved by mere genius, but also by a harsh discovery of a better way of life. Ṣaidaḥ may be right in asserting that the change was only skin deep, that it was not a deep conversion. But it does not need a complete adoption of a new way of life to accomplish a rebellion against the old, even a rebellion reaching the state of complete rejection to which Gibrān arrived when he shouted: "I hate you, Oh my people, because you hate greatness and glory".*

In the South, onvironmental influences worked on quite a different level. Ṣaidaḥ himself gives the key to environmental differences when he, as an eye-witness in the South, describes the early experiences of life and orientation which emigrants to Latin America had. These were marked by savage hardships,[25] lawlessness and a good amount of fanatical oppression.[26] Moreover, in most of the Latin countries there was no trace of the freedom, political and social, which characterized life and thought in the United States.[27] The immigrants in the South found themselves among people who did not surpass them in progress and energy.[28] The pace of life around the immigrants was slower and the Latin American atmosphere, with its loud social tones, its exuberance and emotion, was not unsuited to their original background. It did not confront them with the stark and overwhelming

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* Gibrān's complete rejection, as expressed in this and other statements, may have been the first examples of utter rejection in modern Arabic literature. Later on, in the fifties and sixties, this would become an important trend in Arabic poetry directed, like Gibrān's, against the evils of the nation, the traditions and all conventional ties that suffocated creativity, but on a far greater scale, as will be shown later.

contrast which life in the United States furnished, but with the challenge and clash of an individualism not completely free of fanaticism and prejudice. The great ideal of individual freedom and response to the challenge of things in the North gave way in the South to an individualism of a pattern, well-known in Arab culture, evoked and stimulated afresh by a matching individualism of the Latin pattern. The individual versus things in the North was replaced by the individual versus individual in the South.[29] The whole equipment of a traditional, self-assertive poetry was immediately reinstated with its stock phrases and proud exaggerations. Direct emotional links with the home countries were kept alive, as well as a deep loyalty to traditions in language and style.

But this attachment to the traditional form, style, diction and attitude was also due to another reason. Most of these poets had little access to forms of literature other than Arabic.[30] It is true that they all came from Syria and Lebanon where contact with the West had been established for some time. But they had had no formal education and this, together with the reasons discussed above, decided their ultimate poetic methods. Forced by lack of education to remain out of touch with other literatures, they had no alternative but to stick to the only methods of poetry they knew. The fact that they were Christians and therefore less bound by a traditional loyalty to Classical forms, could not overcome their extremely simple cultural background. Their other Christian compatriots in the North were able to break through the impasse and furnish the best authentic avant-garde literature in the first quarter of this century.[31]

Yet looking at the poetic output in both the North and the South, it is found to be rich and marked by a great vitality. Writers have wondered why Arabic poetry flourished in the Americas, and a number of reasons have been suggested. These varied from the suggestion that it flourished because the poets came from a people noted for their adventurous spirit,[32] to the suggestion that their knowledge of Western literature

spurred them on.[33] It was also put forward that the fact that they were aliens in a strange land stimulated their imagination and stirred in them emotions of homesickness conducive to fruitful creative work.[34] Nu'aimah[35] and Ṣaidah,[36] answering these arguments, insist that it was natural talent that was responsible for the flourishing poetic activity of these poets in the Americas. But a natural talent alone is not enough to explain the great vitality which characterized that poetry. If the poetry in the North was consciously bent on innovation, the poetry in the South was characterized by a marvellous virility and strength of approach, considering, of course, the best examples in both places. One can explain this phenomenon by the suggestion that a naturally endowed number of immigrants found in the Americas the freedom to express themselves unhampered either by political and social fears[37] or by the jealous opposition of a conventional heirarchy of literary arbiters.[38] The simultaneous appearance of so many bards in the Americas is a testimony to two things. Firstly, to what freedom of thought can do to release the currents of creativity in naturally endowed individuals. Secondly, it is a testimony to the fascination Arabs have with words. Away from their country, the only means of contact they could find was through their literary expressions. They were immediately received with enthusiasm and gratitude.[39] The superior work of some of them covered up for the inferior work of the majority who were poorly equipped for their ambitions. The absence in the literary field at home of critics who could take pains early to sort out the Mahjar poetic output left a confusion in the minds of both the poets concerned and the readers at home as to the ultimate merit of the Mahjar poetic contribution. Both praise and abuse were showered on all the Mahjar poets indiscriminately. A weakness detected in the language of the poetry of some Northern poets, for example, was taken as a sign that the whole Mahjar poetry suffered from this 'defect',[40] a too sweeping accusation indeed, because some Mahjar poets like Farḥāt and al-Qarawi are noted for a strength of style and a virile, correct and effective diction.

SECTION 1: ARABIC POETRY IN LATIN AMERICA

It is well to examine the poetry of the Southern group before we turn to study the achievement in the field of avant-garde poetry of the Northern contribution, although the Southern group started writing a little later than the poets in the North Mahjar.

The first thing to remember about the Southern poets is that they were not affiliated in a school of literature which professed certain principles and well-defined rules, like the Northern group. In the North, the formation of "Al-Rābitah al-Qalamiyyah" in 1920 included the issuing of a manifesto, written by M. Nu'aimah, in which its formulations and conception of literature were declared. But "Al-'Uṣbah al-Andalusiyyah", its counterpart in Brazil, formed in 1932, was merely a literary society devoted to the promotion of Arabic literature in Latin America.[41] Some of the best poets in Latin America were members of it and it helped to publish a few volumes of poetry which included Farḥāt's diwans, that of al-Qarawi, (Rashīd Salīm al-Khūri), Fawzi al-Ma'lūf's 'Ala Bisāṭ al-Rīḥ, and Shafīq al-Ma'lūf's 'Abqar.[42] With much appreciated humility, Ṣaidah declares these four works to be the most important works accomplished by the Southern group.[43]

(i) Fawzi al-Ma'lūf

Although the Southern contribution in general could be regarded as a fresher version of the neo-Classical school, some poetic works are singled out for originality and novelty. The most important work of Fawzi al-Ma'lūf (1889-1930), his long poem 'Alā Bisāṭ al-Rīḥ, could well have belonged to the Northern contribution. Its involvement with the 'soul' and its ultimate freedom, with life's absolute slavery, its shackles, and burdens,[44] with the dualism of good and evil, the distinctly abstract atmosphere, is definitely more aligned to the constant search of the Northern poets in the realms of the soul, the question of vice and virtue

and the other dualisms which preoccupied them.[45] The poet imagines himself on an imaginary trip over the clouds, where he meets his soul and rejoices in the union. Exhortations against the evil of man on earth are uttered without hesitancy or compassion. Man lives for evil and the earth has no use for him except dead.[46] The pessimistic tone of the poem and its imaginary framework are directly Romantic. Published first in 1929 in Al-Muqtataf, it immediately drew the attention of readers in the Arab world with its originality. The premature death of the poet in 1930 focussed greater attention on his work and numerous articles were written about the peet and the poem.[47] ʿAlā Bisāt al-Rīh was also translated into several European languages.[48]

There is a purity about this poem, a nobility of style:[49]

فتألبن حول جسمي جماعـــات ... ملأنْ الجـو الفسيـــح دويّـــا
واذا بي اعي عنالـــك اشيـــاء ... ولما حدقت لـــم ار شيّـــا
فكأني في الحلم نشـــوان صـاح ... تتوالى رؤى الخيـــال عليّـــا
ما لعيني والنور شعّ بقريـــــي ... لم تميّز الّا فراغـا خليّـــا ؟
طوقتني الاشباح ،ها هي حامـــت ... ثم اهوت ترفّ بـــين يديّـــا
ولها كاختلاج اجنحة النحـــل ... ازيز يطنّ فـــي اذنيـــا
انها كاللهاث نفحا ولفحـــا ... وكموج الشعاع نشـــرا وطيّـــا
غمرتني بالغيم ينضـح طـــلّا ... واحتوتني بالريـــح تنشر ريّـــا

Despite a purely imaginative context, an authenticity of attitude gave it a special place in modern Arabic poetry and gave its author an esteemed position among the poets of his day.[50] In its pessimism there is a heart-catching element which gave it a different resonance from that of other modern poets such as Gibrān and the poet's brother Shafīq.[51] The flow of its rhythm is a fine example of fluidity and smoothness, and of the harmony of words and phrases. ʿAoun believes that Fawzi has connected Arabic poetry with Western culture,[52] given it a mixture of Oriental and Western elements well suited to the European taste,[53] and a "fluidity and

music rarely found before him".[54] This is rather exaggerated, but it testifies to the influence which this poem leaves on its readers. Fawzi al-Ma'lūf has several other poems, some of them of fairly high standard,[55] some not so high,[56] but he owes his fame mainly to this single work. The ease with which this poem found its way to the hearts of the reading public in the thirties proves not only its poetic value, but also the eagerness of a public in search of novelty and change. The influence of this poem, however, is rather difficult to assess. Its special pure quality does not yield to imitation and therefore remains an isolated example. Other characteristics in it which can be exploited by other poets, lose by reproduction. The idea of the imaginary voyage, for example, itself not new in Arabic and world literatures, has been taken up by his brother, Shafīq, in another long poem entitled 'Abqar, published in 1936. The most famous work of Shafīq, it remains far inferior to the original poem which gave it its inspiration.[57] Another quality of the poem, abstraction, has also been taken on by other poets in the thirties and forties, but with little success. 'Ala Bisāt al-Rīh is possibly the most powerful, and definitely the most successful example so far of the use of abstract images that are indulged in with the ultimate goal of serving a greater idea or delineating a moral side of the human condition. This trend was begun in al-Mahjar poetry in the North, and was strengthened greatly by this poem. An idea takes hold of the poet and he expresses it, not in epigrams and wise sayings, but in the form of a story or within the framework of an imaginary setting. A great struggle was to take place later on in the fifties and sixties to rid Arabic poetry of the sapping effect of this trend as it took hold on the poetry of several poets and led to an indulgence in unfathomable images, often out of the reach of the normal visual sensation. Direct attacks were to be launched to effect a transfer from the poetry of ideas represented by invented situations to the poetry of true

experience where both the image and the idea serve to emphasize an already experienced situation. However, 'Alā Bisāṭ al-Rīḥ remains a unique creative work in modern Arabic poetry, and although it may seem old-fashioned now, it cannot be described as naive or truly out-dated.

(ii) Shafīq al-Ma'lūf, (b.1905) issued early in life a collection of poems entitled Al-Ahlām just before emigrating to Brazil in 1926.[58] It is apparent from examples from this first diwan that the poet follows a Romantic trend in poetry which had begun in Syria and Lebanon partially in the first decade, especially in the poetry of minor poets like Felix Fāris.[59] Here the inner voice of the poet makes itself heard. A new pessimism can also be detected. This pessimism had started to appear in prose and in some poetry in the second decade, as will be discussed shortly. In the North Mahjar it had, by the beginning of the twenties established itself and was now finding its way more strongly into the poetry of the twenties. It was to spread side by side with persistent rhetorical themes of the neo-Classicist, al-Ma'lūf brothers (including a third brother, Riyāḍ),[60] the Tunisian al-Shābbi and the Egyptian Ibrāhīm Nāji being some of its strongest protagonists. Ṣaidaḥ wonders why the Ma'lūf brothers should express such pessimism in their poetry when they were rich and successful men.[61] He does not seem able to recognise in it the beginning of a major trend in Arabic poetry, caught by the poets early in life. This trend found in al-Mahjar the freedom from some of the social ties that bound poetry at home to a set pattern. It was also out of the direct influence of the neo-Classical poetry, then at the height of its power in the Middle East, with its public voice and rhetorical expressions. It was therefore possible for this trend to be released freely in the poetry of al-Mahjar. Fostered and developed by several poets, mostly in the North, this trend led the true current of Romanticism in modern Arabic poetry. But it must

be remembered that it had its roots at home. In the South the Ma'lūf brothers were its best protagonists.

The next work to be published by Shafīq was his famous 'Abqar, 1936. Originally a long poem in six songs and an introduction, it was republished in 1949 with a longer introduction and double the number of songs. It was written mostly in the Sarī' metre and the ordinary two-hemistichs form. It attempted, however, some variations in form, using sometimes shorter versions of the same metre (majzū') and sometimes employing different lengths of verses in the same stanza, much in the same way as modern free verse does. It is an interesting example of the use of al-Sarī' metre, a metre employed later on in free verse with exciting results. In Shafīq's poem, however, there is no musical excitement except in the stanzas where variations occur. In the ordinary two-hemistich stanzas there is an air of staccato hesitancy that gives the poem, as 'Abbūd says, a lifeless coolness.[62]

The poem tells the story of another imaginary voyage which the poet takes, flying to the valley of 'Abqar on the back of the muses and Djin, where a multitude of weird horrifying creatures live, which the poet meets, species by species, in an orderliness highly unpoetical and listens to their exhortations against the evil of man, or to their fragmentary utterings of wisdom. The poem is crowded with painstaking descriptions of these mostly repulsive creatures: gouls, djins, sibyls, wizards, prostitutes, mythological creatures[63] and legendary personages[64] from old Arab mythology. It is also suffocated with feverish descriptions of the strange, confused, tumultuous seething valley in which all these creatures live. Thirty years after this poem was first published, the reader can find very little to gain from it in theme or imagery. It lacks the musical flow and nobility of style of Fawzi's poem. It betrays a forced imagery and a highly artificial subject matter. Its wisdom is banal and outdated. Yet

it was able to draw a great deal of attention and comment in its own time,[65] and even in the present day.[66] The novelty of the work, the fame of the earlier work of Fawzi and a few luminous verses scattered here and there in the poem may provide the reason.

'Abqar is perhaps the first flagrant example in modern Arabic poetry of a poem crowded with words of a horrific character with which the visual and auditory faculties of the reader are continuously bombarded. Already in Al-Ahlām the tendency towards a heated language is manifest; an example is his little poem "Kurat al-Nār":

67

ستجتاح هذا الوجود الزلازل — في هجعة غاب فيها البشر
تهب العواصف فيها وتهمي — الصواعق هميا كوكف المطر
تثور الكواكب تطفو العناصر — يمسي الوجود عبابا زخر
عبابا من النار امواجه — طفا فوقه زبد من شرر
فكيف التوينا نرى الموت شزرا — يحدّق فينا بجمر النظر

In 'Abqar, these features are multiplied. The mood of the poem is blatantly discordant, sometimes even macabre, without being able to arrive at the poetic harmony, artistic depth and emotional crisis which characterize a macabre poem of value such as Baudelaire's "Une Charoigne". The bleakness of the poem and the effusive tirade of repulsive words is an unhappy precedence in modern Arabic poetry for the multitude of similar poems written in the fifties and sixties all over the Arab world. A number of minor poets and at least one major poet were to indulge in this, filling their poetry with a fusilade of nouns and adjectives, much to its own detriment. It is proper, perhaps, to call this kind of poetry the "poetry of excessively repellent images". An early example of this from 'Abqar is the following:

68

عبقر لغز الغيب ما وطئت — اكنافها الا لاربابها
فقم وخض لجة ديجورها — واعمل على تمزيق جلبابها
قم فترى كيف شياطينها — تظل في عينيك من بابها
وكيف من فيك ثعابينها — تنسلّ من فوهة سردابها

وانظر الى الغيلان في وجرها ... تصمّ اذنيك بتصخابها
حشد من الوحش كأني بها ... ترتع من نفسك في غابها
أو شروز ماعيست الني التوت ... تجلد جنبيك بأذنابها
شجعها كرّ الزمان قبلت ... تكشّر في وجهك عن نابها
جمّعها كرّ الزمان الذي ... مرّ في صدرك القى بها

Another interesting aspect of the poem is its interest in reviving the old Arab mythology. The poet must have gone into painstaking study of Arab mythology to gather material for his work, as his long introduction to the poem shows. He is not, however, the first modern poet in Arabic to show an interest in mythology. Gibrān had showed some interest in old Lebanese mythology as early as Dam'ah wa 'Ibtisāmah, a collection of essays in poetic prose which began to appear in different magazines in 1904 and were published in book form in 1914.[69] Aḥmad Zaki Abū Shādi had been trying to introduce Arab poets to Greek and Egyptian mythology on the pages of Apollo, his famous magazine of poetry which he issued in 1932 but which lasted only until 1934. A long and interesting essay was written by Nu'aimah on the Phoenix bird in 1934.[70] Above all, N. 'Arīḍah and Ilyā Abū Mādi had written in the twenties their poems "'Alā Ṭarīq Iram" and "Al-'Anqā' " using two Arab myths, as we will see shortly. Written in this tradition, 'Abqar is the third poem to assimilate ancient Arab mythology. But it must be explained at the outset that the early use of mythology by modern Arab poets, even as late as 1942 when 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā published Arwāh wa Ashbāh, did not show the poets as understanding the use of myth in poetry as it was understood by the modern Western poets.[71] Apart from the poems of 'Arīḍah and Abū Mādi, the myths were mostly adopted in a descriptive and not a symbolic sense. In fact 'Abqar and other poems such as Arwāh wa Ashbāh betray a great ignorance of the use of myth as symbol, for the flatness and directness of the poems are astounding. The

hoard of wise sayings in 'Abqar, moreover, do not lend it a further depth, for they are uttered with blatant clarity often quite ostentatious. The poem is a courageous and studious attempt at a novel subject in Arabic poetry but its influence on later successful attempts at the use of myth in poetry is hard to trace.

One aspect of the poem remains interesting and might have had some influence on later poets. This is the poet's effective variation of al-Sarī' metre in some stanzas:

72

قـــل للألـــى يقـــرع صـــدر اللحـــود
ازميـــــل حفارهـــــم
ارواحنـــا تبني قبـــــاب الخلـــــــود
بغـــــير احجارهـــــم
وتحدج الوجـــــــــود
بغـــــير ابصارهـــــم

تاللـــه لا الاصنـــــام ولا الخرافـــــــات
تهز منـــا العظـــــام ونحـــن امـــــــوات

لكـــنّ مـــن يهزّمنّـــا الرفـــــات
هـــو الذى كـــل امانـــي الحيـــــاة
يفـــتر فـــي ثغـــره
وكـــل ما فـــي الارض مـــن ذكريـــات
يغفـــو علـــى صـــدره

This is an exciting variation of the use of feet "tafā'īl" in the sarī' metre, one of the most dynamic metres in Arabic. Later on, in the fifties, poets of the modern school of poetry were to exploit this metre and produce interesting experiments in it, but it remains true that it was Shafīq al-Ma'lūf who first attempted in 'Abqar one of the most elaborate experiments on this metre.

Writers who tend to favour Shafīq al-Ma'lūf admit that his lyrical

poetry remains superior to his poetry in 'Abqar.[73] He has three more collections of poetry: Li Kulli Zahratin 'Abīr, 1951, Nidā' al-Majādhīf, 1952, and 'Ainākī Mahrajān, 1960. In 1961 he published Sanābil Rā'ūth. In many of his poems in these volumes the return to the inner voice of the poet and to a grace of expression is manifest. But S. al-Ma'lūf, despite his diligent beginning as a poet, and despite a good poetical gift, did not develop sufficiently with the years. 'Ainākī Mahrajān, his last published single work, seemed outdated when it appeared in 1960. A collection mainly of love poems, it sounded embarrassingly ill-fitted for its time. Great changes had taken place in Arabic poetry between 1952 and 1960, and Shafīq al-Ma'lūf seemed completely unaware of any of them. He had remained on the margin of life and did not seem able to treat the love theme with any new depth or vision. He stuck to the outer description of beauty and love.[74]

Turning now to the two other poets who gave riches and fame to the Southern contribution we come to a completely different poetic atmosphere. Ilyās Farḥāt and al-Qarawi and, following them, a number of poets of varying degrees of ability were a stronghold of the neo-Classical poetry and of Arab patriotism. Many of them were fine poets who, while devoted to the best in the neo-Classical poetry, were not committed to its inflexible tenets.

(iii) Ilyās Farḥāt, (b.1893) was a folklorist in his early youth,[75] but after emigrating to Brazil in 1910 began writing poetry in Classical Arabic. However, he destroyed all his early poetry.[76] After 1921 he started reading al-Mutanabbi, al-Jāḥiẓ in al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn, and al-Quran.[77] His first volume of poetry, published in 1925 under the title of Rubā'iyyāt Farḥāt, shows him to have mastered the language and conquered the obstacles of a scanty education. The volume is a collection of quartets written in

several metres. Ardour and a wide range of interests are manifest in this first collection. The poet also shows a characteristic Arab trait in his short utterings of wisdom and his sharp, brief comments on the philosophy of life. During the following decades Farḥāt won great fame as a poet bent on defending the Arab cause. His fiery verses on Arab politics and national events were circulated widely all over the Arab world. But he is a poet of varied interests. His main work, Dīwān Farḥāt came out in 1932;[78] later in 1953, his allegorical book of verse entitled Aḥlām al-Rā'i was published. In this small volume a herd of sheep and their dog comment on the evil of man. It is a biting and bitter satire on the power and might of both clergymen and the rich. However, although this work might seem unique and original as Ṣaidaḥ finds it,[79] it is not the best of Farḥāt's works. The poet is really at his best in his lyrical poetry, when he gives full reign to his emotion and allows his spontaneous impulse to direct the course of the poem.

Because of an argument in verse between Farḥāt and Fawzī al-Ma'lūf which the latter started by condemning the continuation of Bedouin tradition in poetry and to which Farḥāt retorted by defending the old traditions which he regarded as roots for the present, the impression that Farḥāt represented the stronghold of traditionalism in al-Mahjar was left to grow unchallenged.[80] This was helped by Farḥāt's typically Arab personality which was never adulterated in the life-time he spent in foreign lands. It was also confirmed by the poet's Classical strength of language and powerful style. But Farḥāt, within the Classical framework, has done a great deal towards the purification of poetry from shamness and inherited traditional weaknesses. There is a conventional crispness in his poetry, a vigour and directness which are rare. He is talking to his dead parents:

81

لهفي عليه مضى بداء حنينه ... وبقيت صابرة على بلواك
ان كان اهلكه الفراق فانما ... امل اللقاء هو الذى ابقاك
انفقت عمرك ترقبين رجوعنا ... وتجوس كل سفينة عيناك
وتحملّين الريح كل رسالة ... خرساء لفّتها فؤادك فاك
ما مرّت النسمات بي عند الضحى ... الاّ عرفت بطيبها رياك
....
اشقى النساء على الثرى ام قضت ... ايامها في وحدة النساك
ابناؤها ملأوا البيوت وبيتها ... خال من الحدّاث والضحّاك
سحروا بمزعوم الغنى فتحولوا ... صورا على الجدران دون حراك
الاذن توهمها سماع حديثهم ... والعين تنذرها ، نهاك نهاك

Farḥāt broke with no traditions, but his quality is remarkably pure and he is impressibly free from the depressing self-conscious pompousness which characterized most of the neo-Classical poetry of the time. There is a charming humility in the following verses:

82

وسابقت في الشعر فرسانه ... فقصرت عن فارس مفلح
ففلت اعرقل ميدانه ... فقال ضميري الا تستحي؟
فعدلت حبّ التفوق فيّا ... ولولا ضميري تركت دويّا

He is the example of the poet who was able to cross the labyrinth of imbued ideas and attitudes and the cliches of expressions to arrive at a great deal of emotional[83] and intellectual veracity without abandoning, in the least, the traditional style and strength of diction. He is by far the most spontaneous of the Mahjar poets, North and South, and one of the most authentic poets of all modern Arabic poetry.[84] He must have been helped towards this by a basic goodness, pride and dignity, qualities which Ṣaidaḥ attributes to him unhesitatingly.[85] His very limited formal education has confined him within the framework of the traditional poetry in style and phraseology - but aside from this he was unrestricted, uninhibited and independent.

Quite early, he showed a tendency towards a liberation in form in

some examples of his poetry, although he remained, for the most part, within the conventional framework. One of the most interesting examples in form is a poem written as early as 1922 where a great freedom in the variation of the number of feet in each line of poetry appears. The poem is made up of three stanzas. The repetition of the same method of variations of the feet in each of these stanzas has turned the original freedom into a pattern similar to the kind of restrictions of the muwashshah:

86 اولى فراخ البلبل الغـــرد هذا جناح ابيك فاعتمـــــدى

العشّ بـــين الغـار والآس
في مأمن من اعين النـــاس
ان رصّعته السحـب بالمـاس
فالشمس تنشفـه
والورد يكنفـــه
والطيـر تعزفـه
فوق الغصون فيسكت النهـر
وتصيخ مصيغة لها الزهـــــر
فتودّ لو تحتلّ الزهـــــــر
برجا يثيـــر كوامـــن الحسد في الثور والسرطـان والاســـد

The transfer from a poetry long dedicated to public ostentation to a poetry of experience and direct personal involvement with things took place at his hands easily and naturally; so easily and naturally that his service has not been clearly noticed by critics and writers on al-Mahjar. They had certainly noticed that his poetry mirrored his life but they did not refer the personal story he tells in poetry to a basic development in the art and to a new approach and a different attitude. There is a heart-catching and tragic revelation in the following verses about himself:

87 قد حاربتـه الليالي الغدر عاصبـة عينيـه تعصر صـاب اليأس في فيـــه
وقد تجاوز حدّ الاربعين ومـــا ينفكّ يقذف من تيـــه الى تيـــــه

It is his national involvement which is usually commented on and praised. But even this aspect, which had been so impersonal in similar poetry at home, is linked in Farḥāt with a personal joy and a deep personal suffering. For even when he speaks to the whole Arab world, his public voice echoes his inner feelings with great poignancy and ardour; talking to the oil kings in the Arab world he says:

88

يا صاحب الآبار تقذف ثروة ... تكسو النفود من الربيع بروداً
ان الشبيبة في الازقّة عندنا ... كالمال عندك في البنوك ركودا
فاذا جمعنا القوّتين تحركت ... في البيد عاصفة تهزّ البيدا
منا رجال للجهاد ومنكم ... ذهب تحوّله الرجال حديدا
....
فافتح لنا باب الرجاء نشب على ... صهيون رغم الانكليز اسودا

Right from the beginning, he was able to arrive, with true artistic instinct, at unity in the poem,[89] and was also able to pave the way in poetry, both through humour and tragedy, towards the pathos in life.

The human relation in Farḥāt's poetry is remarkably natural and spontaneous, with no traces of the stereotyped cliches and affected attitudes. In the following heart-catching extract from his poem "Ḥafīdāti" to his grandchildren, old age is a fact rendered bitter when the little girls depart, but is bearable in their young presence:

90

حفيداتي ، حبيباتي ... فراش الروض والزهر
نأين وهنّ لي دنيا ... يضوع بساحها البشر
وهنّ ـ وقد ذوى عودي ... وجفّ ـ لُما لدى الضرر
فضاء البيت بي وحدي ... وضاق الخلق والصدر
....
وفي دنيا النوى واد ... خيالي فوقه جسر
اسير عليه يحدوني ... فؤاد ما له صبر
فالقاهنّ في وهمي ... فيا وهمي لك الشكر
والثمهنّ طمآنا ... فيحلو في فمي المرّ
فراشات على شيبي ... تحوم وكلّها طهر
وما في حومها بدع ... ولا في حبّها سرّ
فشيب الجدّ ازهار ... لها من عطفه عطر

(iv) Rashīd Salīm al-Khouri, known as al-Qarawi, (b.1887) is another cornerstone of the Southern contribution. In the annals of national poetry his name rings supreme.[91] His verse is fiery, emotional and direct. Like Farḥāt, he had little formal education and, like him, he led a life of hardship and toil. He published as early as 1933 Al-A'āsīr, a collection of his national poetry which contains some of the most famous of his poems,[92] with an introduction in which he discusses poetry and politics. In 1952 his main diwan, a huge volume, came out in Sao Paolo,[93] with a preface in which he wrote an autobiographical sketch of his life. Aside from more personal poems, this diwan is a record of the public events and national happenings which took place in the Arab world over four decades.

In al-Qarawi, there is a conflicting mixture of the conventional and the independent. He is less spontaneous than Farḥāt, but his great emotional sincerity compensates for this. His patriotic poems are, like those of Farḥāt, a fiery outcome of a personal involvement and a continuous commitment. His introduction to Al-A'āsīr is one of the first discussions on engaged poetry to be written in Arabic from personal experience. His argument is extremely plausible and as modern as any of the later arguments speaking about the subject in recent years, geared to the tenets of neo-Realism. To be committed is not an act of the will as much as a spontaneous reaction to life around.[94] His people, his country, were suffering. He must inevitably suffer too, and naturally write about his feelings.[95] If he were a European, he would preach peace and charity. As an Arab yearning for freedom, he must perforce preach hatred to the enemies of freedom.[96]

Perhaps al-Qarawi's best national poetry might not meet the approval of the modern school of poetry in Arabic which rose in the fifties, for rhetoric and exteriority are greatly condemned by them. But there is no doubt that some of al-Qarawi's national poems are among the greatest in

modern Arabic national poetry. Modern poets might well benefit from the study of the emotional jets in his poetry and from the poet's unrivalled capacity to transfer both image and emotion to the verse:

97

ولكنني اصبو الى عيد امة ... محررة الاعناق من رقّ اعجمي
هبوني عيدا يجعل العرب امة ... وسيروا بجثماني على دين برهم
فقد مزقت هذى المذاهب شملنا ... وقد حطمتنا بين ناب ومنسم
سلام على كفر يوحّد بيننا ... واهلا وسهلا بعده بجهنم

Al-Qarawi is the example of a poet who took poetry very seriously, a career to live and fight for. Despite a conventional basis, he instinctively sought a more modern idiom than the ordinary conventional poetry of the day. But, unlike Farḥāt, he indulged in poetry of occasion and has a chapter in his diwan devoted to this called "Bāb al-Maḥāfil wa 'l-Majālis" amounting to about 180 pages, which shows the poet's involvement in a social life which should have been beyond the scope of serious poetry. Moreover, he has not always shown a capacity to keep to the unity of the poem. But despite these faults, al-Qarawi has greatly enriched the treasury of national poetry. A Christian poet, his introduction of Christian themes does not stem from religious grounds, but is dedicated to the fight against imperialism or religious intolerance at home.

98

اذا حاولت رفع الضيم فاضرب ... بسيف محمد واهجر يسوعا
" احبوا بعضكم بعضا " وهذا ... بها نئبا فما نجت قطيعا
" فيا حملا وديعا " لم يغلّف ... سوانا في الورى حملا وديعا
غضبت لذات طوق حين بيعت ... ولم تغضب لشعبك حين بيعا
الا انزلت انجيلا جديدا ... يعلمنا ابا لا خنوعا

and this:

99. حملت صليبي قاصدا ارض موعدي فمن شاء فليحمل ورائي صليبه

His poetry has not therefore strengthened the Christian tradition in modern Arabic literature from a spiritual point of view. But the

introduction of originally Christian terms in such popular national poetry in such verses as:

انـي على دين العروبة واقـــف قلبي على سبحاتهـا ولسانـــــي 100
انجيلي الحب المقيـم لاهلهـا والذود عن حرماتها فرقانـــــي

might have helped towards the acceptance of these words in the vocabulary of modern Arabic poetry and eventually towards their use in more recent examples by Christian and Moslem poets alike.

Footnotes

1. See G. Ṣaidaḥ, Adabunā wa Udabā'unā fi 'l-Mahājir al-Amrīkiyyah, 3rd edition, Beirut, 1964, p.54; and see ibid., p.337, a quotation by Ṣaidaḥ where he gives the opinion of Naẓīr Zaitūn, a well known prose writer in Brazil, on the difference in value between prose and poetry in the South. See also, ibid., p.383 for the opinion of Tawfīq Qurbān on the subject. Both writers thought the poetry of the Southern poets far greater than the prose of their fellow Southern immigrants including their own.

2. Al-Shi'r al-'Arabī fi 'l-Mahjar, Cairo, 1955.

3. Al-Tajdīd fī Shi'r al-Mahjar.

4. See Fi 'l-Adab al-Ḥadīth, II, 203-7.

5. See his chapter, "Al-Muhājarah wa Atharuhā 'l-Adabī", Ittijāhāt, pp.278-97.

6. Ibid., p.289.

7. See his essay "Adab al-Mahjar", Muḥāḍarāt al-Mausim al-Thaqāfi, 1963-1964, Damascus, 1964, VII, 333.

8. 'Alā Bisāṭ al-Rīḥ (1929) and 'Abqar (1936).

9. Al-Shi'r al-'Arabī fi 'l-Mahjar, Beirut, 1952.

10. Shu'arā' al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah, Cairo, 1957.

11. As quoted by Haddārah, op.cit., p.48, from Majallat al-Ḥadīth, January 4th, 1949.

12. As quoted by R. Khouri, Al-Fikr al-'Arabī al-Ḥadīth, p.262.

13. See the introduction of Al-Rabī', Ilyās Farḥāt's diwan, Sao Paolo, 1954, written by George Ḥassān al-Ma'lūf, where he says "the impact of the environment on the Arab immigrants in /North/ America was devastating, and it alienated them from ... the Arabic language. They liberated themselves from some of its rules and did not, except for a small number among them, remain loyal to the language of their fathers... But the Arabs who emigrated to Latin America, especially Brazil, preserved the /bonds/ with the Arabic language ... and strengthened them." pp.37-8. See also W. Dīb, Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi fi 'l-Mahjar al-Amrīki, Beirut, 1955, pp.22-4.

14. Maqdisī, op.cit., pp.282-3.

15. See also an essay by the present writer entitled "Farḥāt al-Shā'ir al-'Arabi", Al-Adīb, May, 1956, p.30, in which causes for the differences between the Northern and Southern groups of poets are given.

16. Ṣaidaḥ, speaking of the birth of Arabic literature in al-Mahjar, pays tribute to these three men of letters, op.cit., pp.49-50. W. Dīb, op.cit., p.22 names them as the leaders.

17. Maqdisi op.cit., p.283.

18. For this see the present writer, "Farḥāt al-Shā'ir al-'Arabi".

19. M. Nu'aimah, Sab'ūn, Beirut, 1960, II, 204 et seq; see also 'Abbūd, Mujaddidūn, p.216 for Nu'aima's speech to the people of his village, Biskintā; see also A. al-Rīḥāni, Al-Rīḥāniyyāt, 4 vols., Beirut, 1922-23, I, 63-7 and 136, and II, 8-9.

20. Op.cit., p.75; see also his chapter "Al-Ta'aththur wa 'l Ta'thīr", pp.91-100.

21. Ibid., p.75.

22. Ibid., p.109. Sab'ūn, II, 211.

23. Loc.cit.

24. Ibid., also p.113 where he says that most of the Mahjar poets did not read any Western literature. See ibid., pp.113-4, for his quotation of a conversation with Nu'aimah in which the latter testifies to the same matter.

25. Ṣaidaḥ, ibid., pp.38-44. However, this should not indicate that the life of the new immigrants in North America entailed no hardships. It did, but these were the natural hardships which a poor stranger will have in a new country. The savagery of life in the South compelled the immigrants to arm themselves continuously. See ibid., p.41, for example of this in poem by Mas'ūd Samāḥah.

26. To the natives, it seems, these immigrants were all Turcos and second place. See ibid., p.392.

27. See Ṣaidaḥ's interesting section on 'lack of freedom in the South', ibid., pp.103-8.

28. Maqdisī, op.cit., p.283.

29. The present writer, in response to her essay, op.cit., received a letter from Khaldūn Nuweihiḍ, author in Spanish of Arabia (1959) and Ten Years of Progress (1963), and himself an Arab immigrant in Venzuela, in which he strongly confirmed the above suggestions.

30. Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., pp.109 and 114-5.

31. On the fact that Christian poets and writers were able more quickly to liberate themselves from traditions, see W. Dīb, op.cit., pp.33-5.

32. M. Mandūr, Fi 'l-Mīzān al-Jadīd, p.85; he called them Phoenicians.

33. Ibid.; see Ṣaidaḥ's argument against this, op.cit., pp.108, 113-6.

34. 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., p.34, speaking with reference to the creation of the Romantic school in al-Mahjar; also Mandūr, loc.cit.

35. See quotation by Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., pp.113-4, from his conversation with Nu'aimah; Nu'aimah, however, never got over his wonder at the effervescence of good Arabic literature in al-Mahjar. "A strange dream" he calls it. See Al-Ma'rifah magazine, Damascus, February, 1964, II, No.24, 106, for his comment in the interview with 'Abd al-Karīm al-Ashtar which took place on the 4th of December, 1958, in Beirut; Naẓīr Zaitūn, the South Mahjar essayist also shares this astonished wonder. See Al-Ma'rifah, June 1962, I, No.4, his long, useful, if somewhat flowery article "Fi 'l-Adab al-Mahjari", pp.75-89, especially p.89.

36. Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.116.

37. Ṣaidaḥ mentions that, despite oppressive regimes in Latin America, Arab poets and writers were free to attack their own governments and the clergy of their countries, ibid., p.106.

38. Ibid., p.116.

39. This was roughly the case all over the Arab world, with the exception of Egypt. On this see ibid., pp.60-2. See also the report of the violent attack by the Egyptian traditionalist poet ʿAzīz Abāẓah on the Mahjar literature at the celebration given in honour of the Mahjar poet George Ṣaidaḥ in Cairo in 1956; Al-Adīb, May 1956, pp.73-4; see also Abāẓah's introduction to ʿAbd al-Ghani Ḥasan's book on Mahjar poetry. But this of course is only a general statement. Egypt's best critic of modern poetry in the forties, M. Mandūr, praised their poetry above any contribution in Egypt and regarded it as superb. See his interesting chapter "Al-Shiʿr al-Mahmūs", Fi 'l-Mizān al-Jadīd, pp.69-85.

40. See the comment of the Egyptian poet, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Abāẓah, on this as quoted by Ṣaidaḥ, ibid., pp.202-3. See also Ṭāhā Ḥusain's article on Ilyā Abū Māḍi's Al-Jadāwil, in Ḥadīth al-Arbiʿā', III, Cairo, 1945. On pp.226-7 he attacks the language of the Mahjar poets as a group.

41. For a description of Al-ʿUsbah al-Andalusiyyah, see Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., pp.381-7; see also ʿAbbūd, Mujaddidūn, pp.217-8; Ilyās Qunṣul, op.cit., p.38; ʿĪsā al-Nāʿūri, Adab al-Mahjar, Cairo, 1959, pp.24-8.

42. Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.387.

43. Ibid.

44. See for example "Al-Nashīd al-Thālith", ʿAlā Bisāt al-Rīḥ, Beirut, 1958, pp.88-90.

45. On the conflict and dualisms of the group of Arab poets in the North Mahjar called "Al-Rabitah al-Qalamiyyah", see I. ʿAbbās and M.Y. Najm's illuminating work Al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi fi 'l-Mahjar.

46. See ʿAlā Bisāt al-Rīḥ, pp.133-4.

47. See Dhikrā, Zahlah, 1931, which is mainly a collection of articles on Fāwzi al-Maʿlūf; see also the essay of Ṭāhā Ḥusain on him and his poem, Ḥadīth al-Arbiʿā', III, pp.201-9, where he praises him very highly.

48. For a list of its translations, see al-Badawi al-Mulaththam, Shāʿir al-Tayyārah, Fawzi al-Maʿlūf, Cairo, 1948, pp.62-4.

49. See Ṭāhā Ḥusain's description of the poem and its effect on him, Ḥadīth al-Arbiʿā', III, 204-9. Verses from ʿAlā Bisāt al-Rīḥ, pp.125-6.

50. ʿAbbūd, Mujaddidūn, p.219.

51. F.J. Aoun, Fawzi Maʿlūf et Son Oeuvre, Paris, 1939, p.164.

52. Ibid., p.165.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid., p.163.

55. For a collection of his poems, which are not published in a separate volume, see al-Badawi al-Mulaththam, op.cit., pp.65-78, where he has some examples; also Aoun, op.cit., appendix II; Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., pp.413-420 also for scattered examples.

56. See ʿAbbūd, Mujaddidūn, p.219.

57. Writers on ʿAlā Bisāt al-Rīḥ are adamant that Shafīq wrote his ʿAbqar under the influence of his brother's poem; see Aoun, op.cit., p.164; ʿAbbūd, Mujaddidūn, pp.219-20.

58. See Sanābil Rā'ūth, a selection of Shafīq al-Ma'lūf's poems, Beirut, 1961, pp.289-93, for opinions of several writers of the twenties on Al-Aḥlām. It is interesting to note the difference in opinions between the then avant-garde Nu'aimah (292-3) and the neo-Classical Khalīl Mardam Bek (291).

59. See 'Abbūd Mujaddidūn, pp.126-8, a discussion on some Romantic poems written by F. Fāris as early as 1908. There is a marked pessimism and a fascination with love and sorrow. It is worthy of mention here that Fāris himself was not fully aware of the changing spirit of poetry, for he eulogized Nāẓim Pasha, the Governor of Damascus; see ibid., p.124.

60. On Riyāḍ see Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., pp.434-6; also Ḥasan, op.cit., p.240.

61. Op.cit., pp.424-5.

62. 'Ala 'l-Miḥakk, p.166.

63. Such as "al-'Anqā'" and the Phoenix which appear in the tenth song; 'Abqar, 4th edition, Sao Paolo, 1949, pp.263-9, and the myth of "Anāhīd", the prostitute turned into a star in the eleventh song, ibid., pp.280-90.

64. Such as the legend of Naṣr bin Dahmān who regained his youth, in the eleventh song, ibid., pp.274-8.

65. On this see Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.426.

66. To name a few recent sources which praise the poem see ibid., pp.426-8; Ṣaidaḥ, however, contradicts himself for, while asserting that the poem is "a gigantic undertaking" (p.426), warm and artistic (p.428) with "a soaring imagination", he admits that the poet "imposed on himself an extremely difficult project in describing protruding canines, hollow sockets and flying jaws" (pp.426-7) and that "the poetry complains of the grotesque nature of the subject, the dryness of the story and the incapacity of the events to yield to the poetic faculty" (p.427). For other sources that praised the poem see an article by Salīm Naṣr, "Shafīq Ma'lūf, Shā'ir Tadārakathu Jinn 'Abqar", Al-Adīb, August 1955, pp.16-20; also another article by Eduard Ḥunain, "Shafīq Ma'lūf wa 'l-Shi'r al-Mahmūs" Al-Ādāb, October 1955, pp.7-8, at the end of Sanābil Rā'ūth, moreover, there is a long appendix with many extracts from articles written about 'Abqar between 1936-1960, pp.249-321. 'Abbūd, however, in 'Ala 'l-Miḥakk, pp.161-88, discussed the poem unfavourably in four consecutive articles; later on, in Dimaqs, he again wrote a short comment on the new enlarged edition of 1949, confirming his previous opinion on 'Abqar and adding that the additions only increased the faults of the poem (p.68).

67. Sanābil Rā'ūth, pp.230-1.

68. 'Abqar, pp.151-2.

69. For example see his poetic piece "Liqā'", p.94 et seq.

70. "Al-Fīniks, Usṭūrat al-Ḥayāt al-Muthlā", Al-Muqtaṭaf, January, 1934, Vol.84, i, 17-24.

71. See the chapter by Mandūr on the use of mythology in poetry, written with a particular reference to 'Ali Mahmūd Ṭāhā's Arwāḥ wa Ashbāḥ, entitled "Arwāḥ wa Ashbāḥ, al-Shi'r wa 'l-Asāṭīr", Mizan, pp.13-4; see also his other essay, "Pigmalion wa 'l-Asāṭīr fi 'l-Adab", ibid., pp.13-20.

72. Sanābil Rā'ūth, pp.282-3.

73. See for example E. Ḥunain, op.cit., p.8; also Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.428.

74. See for example his poems "Rāqiṣah" and "'Aynāki Mahrajān" in Sanābil Rā'uth, pp.91-2 and 98-100 respectively.

75. See Qāla 'l-Rāwi, a short autobiography by Ilyās Farḥāt of his earlier life, Damascus, 1965, pp.16-20.

76. Ibid., pp.25-6.

77. Ibid., p.43.

78. The main diwan was republished with some additions, at Sao Paolo, in 1954 in three volumes entitled Al-Rabī', Al-Ṣaif, and Al-Kharīf.

79. Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.459.

80. See ibid., pp.417-8, for an account of this episode.

81. Al-Ṣaif, Sao Paolo, 1954, pp.138-9.

82. Al-Rabī', Sao Paolo, 1954, p.298.

83. Ṣaidaḥ also sees his spontaniety and emotional veracity, see ibid., p.444.

84. See Qāla 'l-Rāwi, p.42, where he speaks about his spontaniety in writing poetry and compares himself with al-Qarawi who gathers material for poetry.

85. Ibid., p.460.

86. Al-Rabī', p.181.

87. Al-Ṣaif, p.96.

88. Al-Kharīf, Sao Paolo, 1954, pp.217-8.

89. A.Muraidin, writing about all Mahjar poets in the South, asserts that they have not arrived at unity of the poem. This is a sweeping generalization, for several poets in the South have achieved this. Farḥāt himself is remarkably conscious of it in most of his poetry, several poems arriving even at organic structure. See 'Azīzah Muraidin, Al-Qaumiyyah wa 'l-Insāniyyah fī Shi'r al-Mahjar al-Janūbi, Cairo, 1966, p.598.

90. Al-Kharīf, pp.175-6; see also his little pathetic poem, "Thaubi 'l-Muḥtariq", Al-Rabī', p.96; his poem describing the hardships of his life, "Ḥayāt Mashaqqāt", Al-Ṣaif, pp.29-35; his poem on his lost youth, "Lam Amut Ba'du", Al-Kharīf, p.219-24.

91. Ḥasan, op.cit., p.226; Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.64.

92. See Al-A'āsīr, Sao Paolo, [1933], for poems like "Qaḥṭ al-Rijāl", pp.85-88; "Ṣaiḥatun Lil-Jihād", p.96; "'Īd al-Fiṭr", pp.110-111; and "Sulṭān Bashā al-Aṭrash wa 'l-Tank", pp.26-8.

93. It was also published by the Egyptian Ministry of Education in 1952, then republished by them in 1961.

94. Al-A'āsīr, p.11.

95. Ibid.

96. See ibid., pp.9-10.

97. Ibid., p.111.

98. Ibid., p.27.

99. Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.393; see also p.394.

100. Ibid., p.404.

SECTION 2: ARABIC POETRY IN NORTH AMERICA

The literary contribution of the Arab authors in North America did not limit itself to poetry. Prose had as great an output as verse. However, a great part of the prose that was written did serve the cause of poetry both directly and indirectly. In the first instance it served poetry through the critical material it produced of which M. Nu'aimah's Al-Ghirbāl was the major contribution.[1] The other two authors who wrote on poetry and art were al-Rīḥāni and Gibrān, but their work is less systematic and studied than Nu'aimah's. All three writers propounded a new avant-garde conception of poetry.

In the second instance prose served the poetic development of the time by helping to release and by confirming the Romantic trend in Arabic literature. In fact, it was first al-Rīḥāni's attempts at a poetic attitude in imaginative prose and prose poetry at the beginning of this century, followed immediately by Gibrān's more daring adventures which helped to establish the Romantic school in modern Arabic poetry. From this fertile Romantic beginning (hesitant and erratic in al-Rīḥāni; pure and steadfast in Gibrān) the Romantic school of poetry in North America took roots. Its poets, together with other men of letters who were all bent on innovation in literature, were later affiliated in a literary society called "Al-Rabiṭah al-Qalamiyyah" mentioned above. The influence of this society on modern Arabic literature was very profound.

Thirdly, it was very early in the century and at the hands of al-Rīḥāni and then Gibrān, that the possibility of a poem written in prose was suggested and given initial form, although it never reached a truly mature stage at their hands. Arabic poetry at this time, i.e., during the first and second decades of this century, was showing signs of restlessness with the more or less settled norms of neo-Classicism. All over the Arab world there were attempts at change in the diction, subjects and

form of poetry. In Egypt, the failure of attempts at innovation in the poetic diction, blank verse and, in the case of al-ʿAqqād, subject matter, was due to a limited talent and lack of intuitive guidance, as will be shown in the next chapter. The Mahjar attempts at innovation were much more successful despite a weaker linguistic basis in the two leaders, al-Rīḥāni and Gibrān. A keen intuition, a well-guided talent, a basically different outlook coloured by a more receptive upbringing and schooling and a persistent foreign cultural influence all helped to release the stream of creativity in these men. A movement of innovation and literary adventure, unequalled in its contemporary Arab world, was launched.

(i) The first Arab literary name to shine in North America was that of Amīn al-Rīḥāni (1876-1940), a Lebanese self-made writer,[2] orator and preacher for Arab unity. To recount al-Rīḥāni's total achievement would be beyond the aim of this work, but he served the cause of modern Arabic poetry in four ways. Firstly his early literary activity in America gave impetus and example[3] to the younger immigrants with literary talents around him. Secondly, especially at the beginning of his career, he helped to release the Romantic trend in Arabic literature, as has been already mentioned. Thirdly, his rebellion against outmoded ways in literature in general and poetry in particular, was timely, radical and completely authentic.[4] Fourthly, al-Rīḥāni is known to be the first to attempt consciously the writing of prose poetry in Arabic. This gave him the title of the 'Father of Prose Poetry' in Arabic.[5]

By 1900 al-Rīḥāni had already arrived at the firm belief that radical reform was needed in the Arab East. An overwhelming revolution in thought, spirit and existing material conditions must take place.[6] The idea that the decline in Arab society was due to both ignorance and sectarian fanaticism[7] took hold of him.

Early in his career, his attitude towards this belief took on a radical aspect. In speeches[8] as well as in writings[9] this radicalism drew the attention of the Arabs to him. Having been reared from boyhood

in America, he spent the years between 1897 and his death roving between America and many countries in the Arab World.[10] In his daring ways which were never devoid of charm,[11] he tried to render a double service to his people. In the first place he wanted to be the transmitter of their spiritual message to the West. In the second place he wanted to be the transmitter of the Western message of progress to the East.[12] His translation of al-Ma'arri's Luzūmiyyāt,[13] his collection of mystical poems entitled A Chant of Mystics,[14] (1921), his collection of articles in English entitled The Path of Vision,[15] (1921), his famous book The Arab Kings[16] (1924), his other books on individual Arab kings and his lectures and debates on the Arab cause[17] and other works have all been directed towards delineating a picture of the Arabs that embodied grandeur, lofty spiritual ideals and national aspirations.[18] On the other hand, he directed his energy towards acquainting his people with the best in Western culture and achievement. His many speeches[19] and articles[20] scattered in Al-Rīḥāniyyāt and other books, in fact the whole of his work in Arabic, all aim at opening the eyes of his countrymen to unity, progress, freedom and modern techniques.[21]

Al-Rīḥāni's birth as a radical reformer was in line with the spiritual development in the Arab World. The general intellectual awakening stirred inner feelings of dissatisfaction and anxiety as well as aspirations, some of them vague, some well-defined, to happier conditions. Al-Rīḥāni's spirit embraced and developed these feelings. The general dissatisfaction and anxiety took shape in him in his unmitigated rejection of sectarianism, ignorance and traditionalism in literature and life. The deep aspirations materialized in a dream of grand Arabism unsurpassed yet by its stature. The Romantic basis of this dream is indicated by the fact that it was his readings in Carlisle's "The Heroes" which first inspired him and awakened his mind to the past glory of the Arabs.[22] He visualised the possibility of a renewed glory on a

pan-Arabic scale. In this al-Rīḥānī was more prophetic of the impending trends of thought and emotions in the Arab world than any of his other Mahjar compatriots in the North.

This great intellectual and spiritual leader was a mixture of the Romantic and the Realist. His love of freedom, the grandeur of his vision, his radical uncompromising attitude towards his beliefs, his utter rejection of existing social ills, his revolutionary attitude towards literature, language and art, his deep love of nature and simplicity,[23] all point to the Romantic streak in him. The very image of the Catholic al-Rīḥānī touring the Arab capitals calling for freedom and unity, befriending kings and princes,[24] imposing his fantastic presence on great leaders in politics and literature in the Arab world, receiving the praises of the most famous Arab poets and writers of his days,[25] shocking the traditional sensibility of readers and audience alike with his radical statements, pointing his finger accusingly at the poets around him with the shout "You Poets! Listen!" then delivering his ten commandments for a poetic revolution, after Biblical fashion,[26] the never diminishing ardour of his revolutionary passion; all these conjure up to the mind the impression of a most unorthodox, rather Romantic figure. But he was called a Realist by several writers.[27] As opposed to Gibrān's wanderings in the realm of the soul, and his yearning for Nature, al-Rīḥānī's positive attitude, his down to earth talk about aims and objectives,[28] his call for science, progress and technology give him the aspect of the practical reformer who saw the realistic solution to a bad social and political situation. But his arrival at this intellectual position, as has been said, was through a grand Romantic vision of a revolutionary whose spirit embraced all his world. Never a Romantic escapist, his strength of spirit and his sound intuition enabled him to feel the true currents of life that were stirring under the confused surface of Arab spiritual existence. Thus he was saved from falling into the escapist literature into which other

poets in the North, those of Al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah, had fallen at times. It must be remembered that al-Rīḥāni had "no systematic body of ideas about politics", as Hourani says.[29] This statement by an authority on Arab political thought in this period emphasises the intuitive basis of al-Rīḥāni's intellectual conclusions which 'Abbūd, the most intuitive and penetrating Arab critic of his time, recognised so well. Unlike the other writers, 'Abbūd saw the persistence of the two conflicting trends in him.[30]

Al-Rīḥāni's early rise in America stirred up the literary activity of the Mahjar poets in the North. Before Gibrān wrote his first book, al-Rīḥāni had already published three books in Arabic,[31] in addition to his translated Luzūmiyyāt.[32] He met Gibrān in Paris[33] around 1911 and later in America, the two kept up a literary friendship until their relationship suffered a relapse.[34] Before the first World War they, with others, tried to form a literary society,[35] but when the society was eventually formed in 1920 al-Rīḥāni had already embarked on his career as a roving missionary for Arab unity.

Al-Rīḥāni's interest in achieving a profound change in literature was as passionate as his other interests. His invictives against the defects of poetry in his days had both the Romantic and the neo-Classical schools as targets. In this he was unique in his time. His contemporary critics were still busily destroying the ramparts of neo-Classicism and welcoming the slow but steady appearance of a subjective emotional trend in poetry. Al-Rīḥāni, intuitively anticipating a stream of sentimentalism and dilution in Romantic poetry in the near future, began early his warning attacks.[36] He attacked in neo-Classicism the repetitive form and expression, the unforgivable shamness, the banality and vulgarity,[37] and in the Classical poetry the exaggeration,[38] the lack of unity in the poem[39] and the ambiguity.[40] He also attacked in Romanticism the Romantic sorrows, and the self-centred attitude of the poet. His most notable work in this respect is his booklet Antum al-Shu'arā'. His attack on Romantic* sorrows,[41] dilution,[42]

* It must be mentioned here that he did not use the word 'Romantic'.

and lack of balance,[43] and his insistence on the element of truth and authenticity in poetry[44] are but precedents for the writings of the avant-garde school of modern poetry in the fifties and sixties. His call for the involvement of the poet with the actual life[45] of his people and his condemnation of the subjective, self-centred attitude[46] of some poets around him are legitimate forerunners of the preachings of the neo-Realistic school in modern poetry. Al-Rīḥāni was one of the first critics to call for socially committed poetry, and is perhaps the very first to attack Romantic escapism and meandering in the realms of the abstract and of imaginative sorrows.* Despite the imaginative and contemplative basis to his literary work in which love of nature and the yearning for natural simplicity are often manifest,[47] al-Rīḥāni never indulged in any of the hazardous elements of Romanticism which have always brought about its decadence: the undisciplined emotional flow of language, the ever increasing self-centredness and the danger of insincerity.[48] Long before the movement of neo-Realism started in modern Arabic poetry in the forties, he had anticipated it.

One of the most interesting and important ideas brought forward by him, one which does not seem to have been particularly noticed by writers on him, is that "life is like a prism with many sides and corners. We must look at it today from the sides from which the ancients saw it, but also from those which they neglected or did not know."[49] The concept of the many sidedness of life and the importance of writers and poets seeing its variety and constant change is most valuable and is a direct indictment of the dogmatic nature and stubborn traditionalism of much of Arabic poetic writing in modern times.

Al-Rīḥāni was one of the first Arab writers to rebel against scholasticism in language and the sanctimony Arabic had acquired early in

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* I.ʿA. al-Māzini attacked the Romantic prose of al-Manfalūṭi in Kitāb al-Dīwān, the book of criticism he wrote in collaboration with al-ʿAqqād in 1921 as will be discussed.

the century. In his opinion a writer must be free to rely on his taste and artistic sensibility.[50] Words to him, moreover, had greater qualities than mere resonance, sound and form, for in their delicate nuances there is colour and fragrance.[51] Writing before 1923 he brings to mind the Symbolists' descriptions of the language of poetry.

The third service rendered by al-Rīḥānī to modern Arabic poetry is his introduction of prose poetry.* His resort to this kind of expression may be due to an urge to express himself poetically, hindered by an incapacity to perfect the rhythm of Arabic metres.[52] This could be due to a deficient early education in Arabic poetry, which should help to inculcate the rhythm in a young student, coupled with a natural lack of sensitiveness to Arabic metre. His early access to Whitman's prose poetry which he declares to have imitated,[53] helped to some degree by his reading of the Bible,[54] of Nahj al-Balāghah[55] and probably of the Quran, must have inspired him with the idea. In fact there is a marked influence of the Quran in several pieces where strongly-worded phrases, short rhymed sentences, invocations and typical Quranic repetitions occur.[56] The easy flow of Biblical style, its longer sentences, its melodious undulations so

* Terms connected with variations in form in modern Arabic poetry can be very confusing because writers do not seem to agree on their precise meaning. The terms 'al-nathr al-shi'ri', (poetic prose), and 'al-shi'r al-manthūr' (prose poetry) and 'qasīdat al-nathr' (prose poem) which is a translation of the French term 'Poème en prose', are all used haphazardly by writers on these different forms. The same confusion appears in writings which deal with 'free verse', 'al-shi'r al-hurr'; and 'blank verse', 'al-shi'r al-mursal'. All these will be discussed in their appropriate place in this work. As for the first three terms, the difference between them is this: 'poetic prose', 'al-nathr al-shi'ri' is, or at least should be applied to writings in prose which employ a poetic style, probably some poetic imagery and a degree of heightened emotion. However, it differs from prose poetry 'al-shi'r al-manthūr' in its style, which can be the style of an ordinary essay with typical paragraph structure and possibility of long sentences, or it can even be employed in a complete novel. This has been the kind of prose used by Gibrān in his novels, short stories and most of his writings. Prose poetry, on the other hand, enjoys greater selectiveness as regards its theme, which remains more poetic and not discursive, and differs in the structure of the work. It aspires to take the shape of a poem, with its short lines (sometimes rhymed), its stanza divisions, and its more heightened language, but it seldom arrives at the compression, economy, tension and emphasis of good metrical poetry, although it can be

apparent in Gibrān's work, are more manifest in other pieces which al-Rīḥāni wrote. His unconscious choice of the style of a piece of writing may have depended upon the subject matter.

Al-Rīḥāni's prose poetry however, despite its direct Whitmanian background, was never able to leave the deep effect which Gibrān's work left.[57] This is due to the basic differences between the two styles. Gibrān's mastery of the rhythm of the language was unequalled, despite some occasional linguistic and grammatical mistakes. However it is possible that Gibrān, as 'Abbūd says, was influenced by al-Rīḥāni's attempt which paved the way for him....[58] but one feels, nevertheless, that Gibrān would have found his way to the particular kind of poetic expression he used even without al-Rīḥāni. However, al-Rīḥāni's attempt left its impact on a younger generation in the Arab East, who benefited by his particular kind of structure in the poetic piece. This included the short sentences, the division of the poetic prose piece into shorter or longer stanzas, the unity of theme in the piece, the repetitive phrases, the invocations, the attempt at charging the piece with emotion (often not so successfully) and the employment of images and metaphors taken from nature. It is impossible, however, to trace with any accuracy his influence on other poets, but the enthusiastic reception of the first two volumes of Al-Rīḥāniyyat[59] and the originality and freshness of his attempt suggest that a considerable influence might have been felt by his younger contemporaries.

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equally emotionally involved. Prose poetry was written by Gibrān in addition to his abundant poetic prose and by al-Rīḥāni quite early in the century. The term prose poetry and not prose poems is used in this context because the word 'poetry' is a looser term and covers a larger area than the word 'poem'. The poème en prose in Arabic was only arrived at with success in the fifties, as will be discussed in the final chapter of this work.

Al-Rīḥāni is one of the most interesting literary and intellectual figures in the Arab world during the first forty years of this century. He enjoyed a great popularity and fame during his life-time[60] and was one of the strongest voices of freedom to be heard during that time in all aspects of life and creativity. "A whole world in a man" says one writer about him.[61] Perhaps this is a hyperbole, but surely al-Rīḥāni was a man who wanted to liberate a whole world.

(ii) Gibrān Khalīl Gibrān (1883-1931) is the greatest literary figure in the Arab world during the first four decades of this century. A mixture of the sage, the rebel and the poet, he was neither a philosopher nor an active reformer like al-Rīḥāni, nor was his best work a direct contribution to the Arab poetic heritage in any true sense of the word. Yet his service to Arabic poetry was great. It certainly surpassed in value the service of many contemporary poets and critics who wrote directly and exhaustively on poetry.

Although Gibrān's ultimate literary achievement is not difficult to assess and evaluate, it is very difficult to classify under one title. He wrote novels, short stories, essays, poetic pieces, poems, books of discourses, epigrams and other genres.

It is not within the scope of this work to go into the details of his general achievement, but aside from his direct contribution to poetry and the poetic conception, his Arabic works in their entirety served the cause of modern Arabic poetry in two important ways. First, they released, as no other single contribution did, the Romantic current in literature[62] and imposed their particular subjective tone on the contemporary, as well as the following generations. It was Gibrān, in fact, and with him the rest of the poets of "Al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah" in the North who formed the first Romantic school in Arabic poetry and released the Romantic current in literature to its full. Gibrān's pervasive influence on the other poets of "Al-Rabiṭah" was such as to cause a profound change

in them towards several aspects of Romanticism[63] especially in their enchantment with Nature. Gibrān was helped in this by Nu'aimah's guiding ideas on literature and his insistence on the necessity of bringing about a change in it, as well as by the fact that these expatriates were suitably remote from constant direct contact with the neo-Classical poetry in the Arab world. Gibrān's pure and straightforward Romanticism was able to influence them profoundly not only because of its strength but also because it answered a latent need in them towards a Romantic expression. This need did not spring from the fact of their expatriation, but their expatriation helped to release it more quickly. They had carried its seeds from home.[64] On an artistic basis, it was a need dictated by the poetic situation itself which was beginning to struggle to release itself from the clutches of a standardised neo-Classicism, about to become fossilised. On a social basis, it was a need lurking in the Arab spirit everywhere. The Arab people had been exposed for some time now to diverse influences in ideas and knowledge. An actual link had been established with the West which was still one-sided and aimed at acquiring from the superior modern cultural experience of the West all that it could yield. The beginning of this century is marked by a great freedom of choice of the sources of culture. The intake of learning from Western sources was unsystematic and free, perhaps even chaotic. Poets fell under different influences according to their chance meeting with them. This is why it is dangerous to generalise when writing about any one subject in Arab life at this period. This also accounts, in part, for the diversity of experience furnished in prose and poetry at that time. The only general factor in the new literature was a greater or lesser tinge of Romanticism, an attribute that had to be acquired by force if any change was to take place in the literature of the time. A short perusal, however, can never deal adequately with the whole diversity of experience, especially with the slow and often painful merging of basic

national and acquired attitudes. However, it can be safely deduced that as soon as there was a discrepancy between the old order of life, so well established when Shauqi was a young man, and the new imported ideas, men fell into an anarchic existence, for there was no longer a general order which could regulate life and creativity. The anarchy brought about by this situation caused a certain kind of isolation of the individual from society.[65] The creative man of letters had to seek order from within himself. A subjective literature was produced, for in similar conditions "the poet creates his own order."[66] It must be remembered that the Mahjar poets in the North experienced the sharpest contrasts between their cultural background and their new experiences, a contrast which they advertised and bemoaned.[67]

Secondly, Gibrān's work, as well as that of his colleagues in "Al-Rābitah", must be seen as a major contribution of the Christian literary tradition in Arabic literature.[68] It is a tradition that had been growing steadily since the eighteenth century as has been discussed but had not been able to establish itself with any real force before. With the work of Gibrān and his colleagues a Christian spirit as well as Christian attitudes yet unexplored in poetry[69] were released in strong currents. Away from the traditional Arab Islamic atmosphere with its spirit of acceptance involving hardly any conflict, living in a Christian environment and some of them falling under the influence of Christian writers and poets,[70] they were more free to give to good Arabic literature a truly liberal expression of the Christian spirit and to talk freely on Christian themes. Two things are to be decided in this respect. The first concerns the difference between the attitude towards religion in the North and South Mahjar. Although the majority of the poets in the South were Christians, their approach to Christian themes remained within the general Arab framework of nationalism and national unity as has been discussed in the section on al-Qarawi. It was a continuation of the liberal spirit which

flourished in Lebanon and the neighbouring Arab countries after the proclamation of the new Ottoman statute in 1908. The call to freedom, brotherhood, and equality gave free expression to the longing for unity and for the abolishment of sectarian hatreds.[71] This amiability never established itself strongly,[72] but it remained an important theme for poets and writers over the decades. The South Mahjar poetic contribution remains well within this tradition. One can hardly call their introduction of Christian words and references liberation of the Christian spirit in poetry.

The Northern contribution, on the other hand, gave full rein to this truly Christian spirit.[73] Those Christian writers and poets were able to employ the language of poetry and poetic prose for the expression of themes hitherto hardly explored in good literature. From this time on, under the influence of their writings, a Christian outlook, as well as Biblical themes were to appear more freely in Arabic poetry. This trend is mainly due to Gibrān and his belief in universal love based on the Gospel, as well as his great fascination with the personality of Christ.[74] The second point for discussion is whether this current was in harmony with an avant-garde movement in literature which aspired to express the undercurrents of Arab life.

At a time when a great moral and literary force was needed to express these undercurrents, the Southern approach to the subject seems at first glance to be more avant-garde because it was in line with a deep longing for unity and brotherhood. But in fact the whole theme had already been handled for some time in the Arab world. It was becoming a stock theme and was to add itself to the hoard of stock themes that would furnish a rich material for what is called in this work "platform poetry".

On the other hand, the achievement of a Christian ideal in literature seems at first glance a belated and rather reactionary expression when measured against the social and political development of the nation which

sought in its more progressive examples direct secularism. But in the first few decades of this century the Christian spirit, long subdued by the pre-eminence of attitudes belonging mainly to a non-Christian culture, found high literary expression in this group. Former expressions in the same tradition, like those of Marrāsh, were not only of a lower level of creativity, but were also isolated examples. They were therefore unable to impose a Christian theme on a large number of readers as Gibrān's were to do. The appearance and confirmation of this theme must be regarded, therefore, as the expression, not of a reactionary attitude to life, but of an admirable independence of spirit that was able to pave its own way and employ its own tools, divorced to a considerable degree from traditional hamperings.

Gibrān's direct contribution to Arabic poetry was by three means. Firstly it was through his poetical prose; secondly through the verse which he wrote, and thirdly through the diffused writings he did on poetry, language and art in general. Gibrān is mainly a writer of prose, although many of those who wrote on him regard him as a poet, not only for the verse he wrote, but also because of some of his prose.[75] Although most of his prose is poetic,[76] some of it is more outstandingly so than the rest. These are what Ḥāwi calls prose poems[77] and what al-Ashtar calls articles,[78] and what will be referred to here as poetic pieces, or prose poetry in general. But no matter what name one gives to Gibrān's poetical pieces, they remain a unique contribution in modern Arabic literature, dwarfing his other metrical verse. The influence which they, together with Gibrān's other writings, mostly poetical, had on Arabic poetry and prose is unequalled in modern times. A great number of the poets and writers of the thirties and forties came under the direct influence of this extraordinary experiment.[79] Its style, known effectively as the "Gibranian style", will be described later. The fact that it had been influenced directly by the Bible has been established by many writers

and is now common knowledge.[80] The loose flow of Biblical style, the peculiar rhythm, the devotional and incantational tone, the emotional repetitiveness of certain phrases and exclamations, as well as the didactic attitude are all reminiscent of the Bible. He is also the direct heir of Marrāsh, one of the first Christian writers to lean heavily on Biblical style.[81] The effect of the Western Romantics has also been established. He could turn to more informed sources with ease and enthusiasm. Indeed, it was not necessary for his creativity to operate without background or living examples. As he became acquainted in turn with Rousseau, Blake, Nietzsche and probably other German Romantics, he was able to find in them, not only inspiration, but also confirmation of his own literary and spiritual tendencies.

But behind Gibrān's experiment was a real creative need for a new flavour in the spirit as well as the style of literature. He marks a turning point and a division, not only in the literary conception, but also, and this is much more important, in the literary sensibility of the time. His was a real revolution in outlook and poetic attitudes. Before Gibrān's unusual experiment, Arabic poetry, despite individual differences, showed a more or less homogeneous background all over the Arab world, governed by a homogeneous outlook on life. A largely uniform mentality and sensibility had been established over the centuries from Morocco to Yemen. The contempt of modern Classicists for colloquial expressions of popular verse, moreover, prevented the poets from benefiting from the diversified and more locally coloured popular verse of the different Arab countries.*

A zest for Nature, a power of contemplation, a passion for freedom, a love of romance, all come surging up in Gibrān's exquisite writings. If any one person is to be credited with heralding the Romantic movement

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* Whenever the modern Arab poet benefited from the folk-lore, originality resulted. This will be the case of several poets including Nu'aimah and the Jordanian Muṣṭafa Wahbi al-Tall, as will be discussed.

and at the same time bringing it to its climax, it is this prophet of solitude. Other contemporary authors like al-Rīḥāni and Muṭrān never possessed a pure Romantic gift, as has been discussed.* But in Gibrān the mysterious magic of pure Romanticism at quite a healthy level, flows gushing in the poetic enthusiasm which we meet even in his early writings. The impulse to sing from the heart, the rejection of social and literary traditions and shackles, the rebellion against established form in literature, the lyrical impulse, the search for the mysterious in Nature, the veneration of Love, the adventurous soaring of imagination, all combine to give poignancy and weight to his Romantic adventure.

The causes for Romantic affinities in the first few decades of this century have already been discussed briefly and will be elaborated more fully in the chapter on Romanticism in modern Arabic poetry.** Gibrān's personality, moreover, was naturally inclined to a Romantic attitude. It was dreamy,[82] intense and "highly impressionistic."[83] Gibrān not only

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* Al-Manfalūṭi, even as he began early in the century, already introduced some decadent streaks of Romanticism into Arabic literature: uncontrolled sentimentalism and exaggerated melancholy.

** These causes give the explanation why Arab poets, right from the nineteenth century, showed interest mostly in Western Romantic literature. Ṣabri, Shauqi and Muṭrān usually turned to Romantic Western literature in their readings or translation. So did al-Manfalūṭi and al-Rīḥāni as well as al-ʿAqqād, al-Māzini and Shukri, as will be discussed shortly. It is to be expected in this light that other Arab poets and writers during this period would follow suit. Ḥāwi mentions the fact that Gibrān's reaction to Cubism in painting was one of rejection and bewilderment, although he had striven to understand it.[84] He goes on to say "His favourite among the French writers were the romantics, Rousseau and Voltaire. He may have read the symbolists but his reaction to them, even if not hostile as his reaction to cubism, could not have been favourable."[85] Ḥāwi, however, does not analyse the causes behind this phenomenon. The fact is that Gibrān, like his Arab contemporaries, despite an authentic yearning to change life and literature, could not really assimilate the new trends in literature and art in the West which came as a result of a long process of development and artistic growth. From the grip of revived Arab Classicism the second step could not have been Symbolism, which is a more sophisticated form of art. Neither the artistic sensibility nor the innate needs of the era allowed for such an assimilation. And as for Cubism, how could the Arab spirit assimilate, at the beginning of this century, the spirit and intricacies of such an advanced form of art?

caught the spirit of the age but very much confirmed it. All the other attributes of his writings were Romantic: the theme, the imagery, the rhythm and the diction. He revolutionised the literary art in every sphere. Although conscious of his work, he was led to a cultivation of his principles by a deep and well-guided creative instinct.

The most important of the Gibranian themes to concern us here are those themes which affected poetry or which gave, at least temporarily, a different flavour to it. The themes in his works which left their impact on later generations are firstly the themes which spoke of Nature and natural phenomena. It has been shown how Muṭrān, except for a few examples, was not able to present Nature in a unity with man and the universe. It evoked little in him, save an aesthetic appreciation, whereas Gibrān was able to arrive at a mystical fusion with Nature.[86] A new emphasis was given to natural phenomena and we find in Gibrān the beginning of a thread of thought which still persists and which idealises naked, primitive Nature.

Gibrān, whose Romantic output represents the first major literary expression of the Romantic spirit in Arab creativity was, it must be remembered, one of the most socially minded creative writers one could ever meet. Arab Romanticism, in fact, began with him and al-Rīḥāni as a positive movement[87] bent on demolishing the ills and outworn customs of their world in order to build this world anew. Gibrān was not an escapist and the Forest in his writings was not a place of escape but a symbol which tried to solve the problem of human differences, conflict and incongruencies through an all-embracing Love. His pantheistic philosophy is positive and was probably a solution to the basic conflicts he had as an Oriental living and writing in the West. This furnished him with a common denominator of existence in which the fact of one's humanity was enough, and erased many embarrassing differences. This positive and socially-minded beginning of Arab Romanticism is not out of line with

the beginning of Romanticism in other countries, as in England for example where the Romantic poets all began as "centrally political and social poets."[88] The impression that Romanticism is merely a 'mode of escapism' involves a great injustice.[89] Gibrān, the first great Arab Romantic, was deeply involved, even obsessed, with his contemporary history and the realities of his time. It is not in their basic positive attitude that his first expressions seemed to differ from the publicly involved attitude of the neo-Classicists as much as in the mode of presentation where the poet is also the oracular priest, the visionary, the inspired bard. Gibrān, in typical Romantic fashion, fused social problems, philosophy and religion into what Abrams calls "one grand design."[90]

The pantheistic doctrine appealed to him for the above-mentioned reason and also because of its Romantic affinity, for the "sense of identity with a larger power of creative energy"[91] is another Romantic aspect. He arrived at the concept of universal Love through his mystical fusion with Nature. But what is central and permanently acquired in his achievement in this context is the profound change wrought in the Arab concept of Nature. His extraordinary responsiveness to the appeal of lonely nature has lent an unfathomable mystery to his writings and given a massiveness and vividness to his most dreamlike moods. This is a significant departure from the Classical conception of Nature as an outer phenomenon which is either horrifying or aesthetically enjoyable. This last concept especially was easily satisfied with the outer description of the natural scene.

Gibrān's growth in an environment of great scenic beauty, a beauty mysterious, dense and solitary, together with his special spiritual make-up add themselves very strongly to his Western influences. From this time on Nature and natural objects in Arabic poetry would be called to the aid not only of the Romantic poets, but also of the Symbolists and the neo-Realists, as it had only very rarely been employed in Classical

Arabic poetry before.[92]

Gibrān's deep Christian infuences are well manifested by his involvement with the dualisms of life. The basic Christian dualism of body and soul is stressed by him, especially in his poem in verse "Al-Mawākib" as will be explained later. This gave birth also to other dualisms: good and evil, love and hatred, life and death, many of which were adopted by other members of "al-Rābiṭah". There is no proof, however, that these dualisms have been perpetuated with any real intensity in later poetry. The task they accomplished to bring in a new flavour, to employ successfully a new set of concepts and expressions in Arabic and thus to purify and revolutionize the language of poetry and open the way for more themic adventures. For Gibrān's monistic pantheism[93] and his belief in reincarnation* must have seemed rather out of date and presumptuous to a later generation, a generation more inclined towards realistic attitudes and more involved with the problem of man versus his existence on earth.

Gibrān's rebellion against society, the clergy, the outdated traditions, the inherent ills of the nation, have affected the mind and thinking of the generation which was growing up in the thirties.[94] He and al-Rīḥānī, were the first true rebels in Arabic literature who rejected, not only the aggressions imposed from the outer world, but also the stupor, the fetters, the inertia, the fanaticism, the ignorance and stagnation of their own people. Gibrān, as early as 'Arā'is al-Murūj (1906) and Al-Arwāḥ al-Mutamarridah (1908) was already coming forward with ideas that would have

* Hāwi says that Gibrān took this directly from Hinduism or Buddhism or indirectly through Emerson or the popular cults. He names some of Gibrān's sources of inspiration in this but does not mention the Drūzes. The Drūzes, who believe in the transmigration of souls, have a very large and active presence in Lebanon, and it is highly probable that Gibrān was acquainted with their ideas on this which are well known, from his years in "Al-Ḥikmah" School (1897-9) or at other times.

been shocking to a more settled age. But the Arab people had already entered on an age of adventure, had laid themselves open to ideas from all corners of the world, and so long as they did not openly challenge religious dogmas, they took them in their stride. His great love of freedom, his deep belief in human brotherhood, his great zest for spiritual progress were infective and stimulating. An unconscious belief in the inner freedom of the individual and a similarly unconscious loss of respect for old traditions was now subtlely beginning to take hold of the Arab creative mind, and, despite all opposition of conventions and conventionalists, great courage in challenging even the most strongly guarded literary sanctuaries would soon be shown. It is probably safe to trace the beginning of this upsurge of courage to Gibrān's uncompromising attitude to literature and to life. M.H. Haikal intuitively sensed the strength and, in his opinion,"danger", of this North Mahjar movement in literature. Writing in 1930 he said:"The traditionalist and the innovator amongst us must combine their efforts, otherwise the victory will remain on the side of those Americanized Syrians and Islamic culture will be abolished."[95] But Haikal, who well knew the literary value of these Americanized Syrians and acknowledged it,[96] was wrong in thinking that their work was a threat to Islamic culture. What suffered greatly at their hands, and later on at the hands of others influenced by their achievement, were the conventions and the outdated literary taboos. For despite the continuous use of Christian themes in Arabic poetry by later generations (a case very difficult before these Mahjar poets) and despite their acceptance by the majority of readers in the Arab world, there was no confirmation of a real Christian religious attitude in literature as a whole. The Arab creative mind was in no religious mood in the latter decades, either Christian or Moslem. The whole struggle was centred on finding one's identity not only as an individual against society but also as an individual in society facing a stronger and often hostile world.

Gibrān's more or less instinctive pursuit of originality and individuality, his early Christian influences, his abhorrence of traditional barrenness of style and of "prosaic expressions",[97] his natural affinity towards music and harmony, his conscious belief in the necessity of evoking a change in Arabic language and literature, his Western Romantic influences all combined towards the formation of his own special style. To all this one has to add the very important fact of his particular talent and also that he had certain definite ideals, a certain doctrine,[98] to advocate. These ideals were new in the context of a modern Arabic frame of thought, and in order to express them, he had of necessity to find his own language and methods. To this we must add the fact that he was assimilating, as fast as he could, attitudes and ideas from the Western sources with which he came into contact, which had first to be translated in his own mind and then into literature. His burning genius did not seem to stumble or falter and words, expressions, modes and tones were magically transformed at his hand into literature.

The characteristics of his style, the "Gibranian style" are well divided by Ḥāwi into rhythm,[99] language,[100] and imagery.[101] The rhythm of his prose style was decided by his wish to preach and by his Romanticism. His wish to preach probably decided the Biblical resemblance with the use of interrogations, vocatives and repetitions. The Romantic element dictated the freedom which appears so natural in his prose style. Romantic rhythm is an intoxicant. It is more of a dancing rhythm which performs "the task of hypnotizing the reader into a dreamy trance, where his sense of reality is drugged and, at the same time, his suggestibility heightened."[102] However, the best examples of Classical and neo-Classical verse in Arabic are rich in intoxicating music. Shauqi's poetry is especially marked by this capacity to intoxicate the hearers, and a great factor in the success of neo-Classical poetry in Arabic depends on the preservation of this element. But the music of this poetry

intoxicates only to excite. Its marked resonance arouses the emotions and often tempts them into a loud expression of their intoxication. What was needed now was a change of 'gear', a lowering down, so to speak, of the loud elements of this music of Arabic verse into more subdued tones which allied themselves to the dreamier, softer emotions of the reader and appealed to his innermost depths. Such a change could not be accomplished immediately in Arabic verse at that early time when Gibrān started writing; i.e. in the first decades of this century. Neither at the hands of Muṭrān nor the Dīwān group in Egypt was Arabic poetry able to abandon its loud rhythmical expression. Gibrān, writing in prose, was immediately free from any bonds with an established poetic rhythm. His poetic prose with its physical undulating sweep and breadth of rhythm is smooth but energetic almost to the point of being over-charged. It seldom abandons its tone of sermon, and when it does, it still keeps the feeling that the poet is talking to a large group of people. Nevertheless, it could fall on the ears with the magic of a psalm. When his emotions are most heightened[103] there is a fine roll and flurry in the rhythm and it can move at an intense speed. The use of parallelisms and antithesis is another particular quality of his style.[104]

His diction: Gibrān was able to achieve a rhythm more capable of embodying a modern sensibility. For despite his firm Biblical connections, with their archaic tone, he transferred the poetic language to its right context in time not only through his experiment with language but also through the introduction of rhythms more simple and malleable than the rhythms of the inherited Classical poetry. Later on, Romantic poets like Abū Shabakah, al-Shābbi, Nāji and 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā, writing in verse, were able to call forth a great lyrical impulse which was to allow the expression of all the moods of a well established and diversified Romanticism in the thirties, as will be shown.

Gibrān's concept of the role of language in the transformation of

poetry is a modern and mature one. "The life of a language...depends on the imagination of the poet..."[105] and "the only means of reviving the language is in the heart of the poet, on his lips and between his fingers."[106] He wants in language only the spirit and the 'essence'. The /Classicists/ can keep the rind and the skeleton of the words.[107] His belief in the vitality of the colloquial was supported by experimentations in this field. This brought on Gibrān the critical abuse of several writers in the Arab world,[108] an abuse which sometimes impulsively covered the whole of the Mahjar poetry.

Gibrān was not the only one among his generation to try to forge a new diction in poetic expression. It will be shown how Shukri tried but failed in his attempt to introduce words not familiarly used before in Arabic poetry. These, apparently chosen with deliberation, were usually correct from a lexicographer's point of view, but were often devoid of an emotional relation with the reader and could not hark back to his own experience. Naked, white-washed and flatly unfamiliar, they stand in stark contrast with Gibrān's intuitive and highly artistic use of words which are usually charged with an emotional context that gives them force and immediate effectiveness. Shukri, it may be interesting to note here, did not get abusive criticism from the critics in Egypt, despite the absurdity of many of his usages of words.

But Gibrān, despite some mistakes which occur here and there in his works,[109] has a great mastery of language and his vocabulary is one of the most inventive and selective in modern Arabic. He shows fondness for the Romantically remote as when he imitates Biblical language, but also for the realistic as when he tries to adopt words from actual speech. These two qualities, the Romantically remote and the realistic, are Romantic attributes.[110]

Another interesting point about Gibran's language is the easy shift he shows from English to Arabic and vice versa. His works in English are

not relevant here, but, concerning the general aspect of his language it must be remarked that he seems to have chosen, because of the spiritual and universal aspect of his general themes, a vocabulary less idiomatic than the usual choice of a modern poet conscious of modernism in language. For the difference between the consciousness of the East and that of the West (of which Gibrān was clearly aware as has been mentioned already,) should have created for Gibrān the problem of 'root words' and their incapacity for translation from the language of one culture to the language of a completely different culture. For "wherever two consciousnesses differ, as it were, in kind, and not merely in relative lucidity - there the problem of sympathy can always be narrowed down to the problem of the meaning of some one or more fundamental words."[111] But he was able to bridge the gap of what seems to be unbridgeable at the first glance. Probably this is also due to the fact that his sensibility had been influenced and greatly 'tempered' by a universally effective source of knowledge : the Bible.

His Imagery: Striving continuously towards a sacramental balance of language, pouring forth adjectives often in rather unfamiliar ways, he resorts to another technique: the image. His images run into each other like brilliantly coloured dyes, a rest to the imagination and the eyes from some of the hackneyed and over used images of revived Classicism. As metaphors and similes cut upon each other with the clarity of a lucid mind behind them, one's sense of the impassioned conviction of the writer is heightened, as well as of the irrepressible fascination of Gibrān, the painter, with colour and variety. His images evoke feelings, not through stock responses (Gibrān is usually very fresh), but by a highly emotional, new but familiar, way of describing his object. By familiar here is meant that Gibrān in his images, uses, on the whole, words and pictures which, although many are new, could expect from the reader or hearer immediate acceptance.

Ḥāwi speaks of Gibrān's use of what he calls "particular images",[112] of "Biblical imagery which is so lavishly scattered over his pages"[113] and of structural images, depending in the description of this type on Foakes's treatment of them.[114] These last are important in the study of modern poetry because they have recurred in many poems. The poem of this type revolves around a sustained image which informs its whole structure. Gibrān's best example of this kind is his metrical poem "Al-Mawākib".

Gibrān leaned heavily on what Foakes calls 'value-words', i.e. words which represent "concepts or feelings universally regarded as valuable,"[115] such as beauty, love, justice, power, life, death...etc. In true Romantic fashion these were used by him suffused with imagery. He either personified his abstracts or expressed them through a concrete image. He often ends by making the reader feel not only that they are real, but also essential. He intensifies this feeling by resorting to other Romantic tricks: incantations, sweeping rhythms, repetitions.[116]

Gibrān's imagery, moreover, was often highly symbolic. In fact Gibrān's symbols of which the forest, the sea and the night are the most important, anticipated more the later Symbolism of some of the poets of the fifties and sixties rather than that of the early Symbolic poets who flourished in the late thirties and forties and who leaned on French nineteenth century Symbolism. The former use symbols, as Gibrān did, to denote a point of reference, to represent more richly and concretely, a basic idea. The latter use sounds and symbols to evoke impressions and meanings in a magical, suggestive method. A great stress is laid on the inner music of the words and their evocative power. Gibrān's insistence on complete elucidation of his ideas, moreover, separates him many steps further from the symbolist who care nothing or little for making themselves intellectually understood.[117]

Gibrān's symbols, with their structure of thought, moreover, spring from Romantic sources. The forest, a basic motif in "Al-Mawākib", was

a symbol for simplicity and flight from the misery and chaos of the City, a familiar Romantic symbol,[118] where a universal love exists and all of life's dualisms are conquered; body and soul, good and evil, life and death; the sea as a symbol for eternity and unity of all existence,[119] and the night, a much loved topic for his poetic pieces, mostly used for its own sake,[120] but sometimes as a symbol of the poet's delving into his own deeper self, probably his sub-conscious.[121]

The question whether Gibrān's poetic pieces were true poems or not would have been more easily answered in the first decades of this century, before the accumulation of arguments about the subject of prose poetry and poetic prose had become a stumbling block to clear thinking by many writers. The fact that Gibrān, in his life-time, was regarded as a great innovator of an original style shows that his poetic writings were affiliated with prose. If this prose contained a strong poetic surge and was therefore accepted broadly within a 'poetic' framework it should not follow that a poetical piece of his would have been accepted as a true 'poem'. What 'Abbūd said about him as "being more of a poet in his prose than in his verse"[122] does not denote acceptability of his prose poetic pieces as true 'poems'. But this poetic prose, 'Abbūd is quick to note, has affected Arabic poetry greatly.[123] In contemporary times, Nāzik al-Malā'ikah talking about Gibrān as a poet makes sure that the reader understands she is talking about his verse[124], not about his prose. Discussing his pieces in Dam'ah wa Ibtisāmah and Al-'Awāṣif, al-Ashtar never once refers to them as poems.[125] He was, moreover, working under the supervision of Mandūr and seems to have gained the full confidence of the critic.[126] Yet Ḥāwi regards these poetic prose pieces in the two books as prose poems. He believes that Gibrān was able to "cultivate and bring near perfection the prose poem as a genre and as true poetry."[127] But although Gibrān wrote a kind of poetic prose very different from the prose that was being written in his days, and if similar to some of al-Rīḥāni's

yet far more poetical and effective, he does not attain, in any of the chants he wrote, the level of a true poem. This is especially so in his first collection Dam'ah whose pieces had been written in the first decade before Gibrān attained maturity of style and imagination. Some later pieces are highly poetical, like "Ayyuha 'l-Lail", and "Baina Lailin wa Ṣabāḥ"[128] where he attains sacramental purity, as well as "Al-Shā'ir"[129] and "Ayyatuha 'l-Arḍ".[130] But there is in Gibrān's style a dilution and a tendency, mentioned above, to say everything in the poetic piece. The subject is exhausted and there is little left to the discernment of the reader. The 'prose poem', developed later at the hands of others in the fifties has attained quite a different level of poetic quality, as we will see in chapter eight. Ḥāwi, in his writing on Gibrān, ignored any later knowledge on the subject of prose poetry in Arabic, and only connected Gibrān with his direct roots. While this method should be correct in giving historical data which ends at a particular date, it cannot be applied when the question of applying terms is involved. The fact is that Ḥāwi does not give enough reason why he regards these pieces as 'prose poems'. His reference to "the emotional elevation of their rhythm and the work of imagination in the creation of their particular images" is not enough.[131] Moreover, whereas one would agree with him that Gibrān liberated,[132] or at least helped greatly to liberate, Arabic poetry through prose, it does not follow that this prose had to be in the form of prose poems. In fact it is not impossible to liberate poetry through mere prose if it embodies qualities strong enough to impose themselves on the language of the epoch and helps change its sensibility. And although the idea preached by Gibrān that the poet is the liberator of language is a very appealing and very possible one, it does not follow that the only liberator of the language must be the poet. But this would take us into the realms of the philosophy of language. Suffice it to say here that, while we can apply the word poetic, or even poetry to some of Gibrān's writings, the

term 'prose poem', with its definite boundaries, and its full poetic expectations, cannot be used here with any accuracy.

Gibrān's poetic gift was great but not pure. In his passionate desire to preach his doctrine of liberty and universal love to the world, he repeated himself and diluted his style, as has just been mentioned. He could not conceive of liberty divorced from an all-embracing universal love and his writings are fevered by a great passion which was even more prompted by his didactic impulse. He fretted savagely at any restraint, an attitude which poetry cannot allow. This is why the particular mark of his poetic gift : the passion and enthusiasm, are halted and slowed down in his proper verse. And this is why his proper verse is inferior to his prose, to his poetic pieces and to other contemporary verse as well.

This should not imply that Gibrān did not write correctly in Arabic metre. But to write correctly does not make good poetry. Gibrān was unable, apparently, to translate his passionate ideals, his zest and glorious enthusiasm, so manifest in his poetic pieces, into metrical form. The spontaneous sub-conscious formation of a poem, which includes at once form and content, is not strong in him.

But this incapacity must seem to the modern critic providential in the extreme. Had he been in full possession of the spontaneous flow between form and content, i.e. had he been strongly versed in old Arabic poetry and brought up to revere the poetic heritage, one cannot be sure if he would have found courage and guidance to experiment in prose with that which he would have found so galling in poetry. For Arabic poetry at that time, and this has already been emphasised in the course of this chapter, would surely have resisted the attempts at a successful radical transformation of its modes, attitudes and phraseology.

In their discussion of the poetry of members of "Al-Rābiṭah", ʿAbbās and Najm did not apply themselves to a full and separate study of Gibrān's metrical poetry, although they studied the poetry of every other

member of the group alone; Gibrān's poems were discussed only in the course of the general discussion. His influence on his colleagues is shown, implicitly, to be that of ideas and images, an influence of the Gibranian spirit and the Gibranian attitudes and concepts. The truth behind this might be a lack of balance between the pervasive influence of that spirit, of that poetic 'presence' as one might call it, and the metrical poetry itself. Ḥāwi also discusses his metrical poetry in a few lines, mentioning the fact that Gibrān took very few liberties in the form of his metrical poems.[133] Nāzik al-Malā'ikah however, regarded Gibrān as a great poet in the verse he wrote.[134]

Gibrān's long poem, "Al-Mawākib" is regarded as his best poem in verse. Looked at from the point of view of a reader in Gibrān's time, it must have seemed to him a strange poem with its pervasive idea that the lyre's music will persist even after the end of time and the world:

اعطني النـاى وغـنّ — فالغنا يرعـى المقـول
وانين الناى ابقـى — من مجيـد وذليـل [135]
....
اعطني الناى وغـنّ — فالغنا يمحـو المحـن
وانين الناى يبقـى — بعـد ان يفنـى الزمـن

Al-'Aqqād could not accept "Al-Mawākib" as a poem at all.[136] Even Labaki, who takes the pains to discuss it, admits its occasional weak phraseology.[137] However, two things are interesting about the poem. The first is the Romantic idea, adopted and exhausted in one round by the members of the group, that life in the Forest will secure the unity of all the dualisms of life: good and evil, life and death, love and hate, body and soul.[138] The "Cult of the Primitive"[139] is exalted, but the emotion is developed greatly so that the poet arrives at great pantheistic love.

The second thing is the adoption of two voices in the poem, a sort of impersonal dialogue. This technique of two or more imaginary voices in the poem (imaginary to differentiate it from real dialogue) was adopted by Abū Māḍi.

When studying this poem and some others including his poem "Al-Bahr",[140] one grows subtly aware of a rooted traditionalism despite the originality of both the theme and the approach. This is the persistence of the spirit of the preacher and the wise man adopted by most Classical Arab poets. The dogmatic approach,[141] the short jets of wisdom, the decisiveness embodied all in one verse are reminiscent of an old recurrent method of approach.

Gibrān's ideas on art and poetry were the third direct service he rendered to Arabic poetry. His discussion of the role of the poet in changing and developing the language of his time has been dealt with. His attitude towards the general role of the poet was one of profound exaltation. To him, the poet was a link between this world and the other, a clear fountain, a tree planted on the bank of the river of beauty,[142] He is a lonely spirit.[143] Yet, he is simple, gentle, a lover of Nature who keeps vigil during the night for the muse. He is the planter of seed which grows to nourish humanity.[144] There are two kinds of poets in his opinion: one is intelligent with the power to assimilate and adopt other peoples' poetry, the other is inspired even before he is born.[145] For to him, the true poet is one who enters the temple of his own soul...and then comes out uttering words and expressions which are new and renewed every day.[146]

Gibrān changed the literary sensibility of the age. His personality was the most forceful literary personality of his times. His greatest influence probably manifested itself in the thirties, not only because his death in 1931 stirred up the typical critical (and homage paying) activity that follows the death of a great writer, but also because this coincided with the greatest surge of the Romantic wave in the Arab world. After him it was possible to experiment on any level and in any sphere of literature because he was able to liberate the creative spirit. This he did not do merely through a constant preaching on theory, but mostly

through furnishing the splendid literary example that supported it. This stands in stark contrast to al-ʿAqqād's efforts in this respect in Egypt.

Already in the first few years of the Romantic movement, the mood for a later poetry of escapism and melancholic morbidity was established. From Gibrān, the melancholic motif which constantly alternates in his work with the stern premonitions of the preacher and the evocative oracles of the seer, would be greatly exploited, although one can hardly discredit Gibrān for this. Between Gibrān and ʿAli M. Ṭāhā who was a more robust Romantic than his contemporaries, there would appear an intervening crowd of poets steeped in melancholy and despair. But one of the best among them, al-Shābbi, would manifest the same deep involvement with the social and political fetters of his people and would attain, in this respect, great fame in the contemporary Arab world. Moreover, Gibrān's revolution in imagery was accompanied at the same time by a flow of adjectives often stringed one after the other in excessive fashion.[147] As G.H.W. Rylands says, "One epithet is as a rule more telling in poetry than two"[148] and this was to prove true, for this feature of Gibrān's writing was to have a harmful effect on the poets of the thirties and forties, and it was one of the main defects of poetry which the avant-garde poets of the fifties were to try persistently to overcome.

Despite the great need satisfied by Gibrān's timely appearance on the literary field, it was his personal tragedy that he did appear at that particular time. Endowed with real genius, he was handicapped by the peculiarity of the Arab poetic history: its previous stilted growth, the short span of time it had had to develop, its deep involvement, not only with a traditional form and content, but also with an awakening nationalism, the ignorance and timidity of its literary arbiters, the naiveness and often crudeness of its general public. He was constricted by the poetic needs of the time to follow a career of liberating both the form and the spirit of literature but with all the above-mentioned

handicaps he could not be both the liberator and the creator of literary works that could transcend his time and remain in the lead among a growing sophisticated reading elite. Although he is still read widely by the younger generations, to the real student of literature he is now rather embarrassing to read. His originality reeks with the spirit of the all-knowing teacher, and his approach is too sentimental. Arabic poetry, moreover, has had the typical anti-Romantic development in the fifties and Gibrān fell a little out of favour.

(iii) Mikhā'īl Nu'aimah (1889), is the third literary figure to have a great effect on al-Mahjar poetry in North America. A critic, poet, essayist and mystic, his greatest service to Arabic poetry was rendered mostly through his essays on criticism most of which are collected in Al-Ghirbāl , published in 1923. Other essays on criticism are scattered in his many books of collected essays which he published in the course of his forty and more years of literary activity.

Nu'aimah studied at the Russian Teachers Training College in Nazareth until the age of seventeen, then went on a scholarship to Russia to continue his education. After five years of study at the University of Blotava, he emigrated to Washington in 1911 where he entered university in 1912 to study law.[149]

It was in 1913 that Nu'aimah had a chance to discover his critical ability. The chance acquisition of a copy of Gibrān's Al-Ajniḥah al-Mutakassirah coincided with his receiving the first number of Al-Funūn,[150] the famous North Mahjar literary magazine published by Nu'aimah's former school friend Nasīb 'Arīḍah.[151] His joy and enthusiasm at the signs of life, originality and strength in the literary material published in Al-Funūn (among which was Gibrān's famous "Ayyuha 'l-Lail" and al-Rīḥāni's "Bulbul al-Maut wa 'l-Ḥayāt")[152] launched him on his career as a critic. His first critical article entitled "Fajr al-Amal ba'd Lail al-Ya's",[153] included an attack on what he called 'mummified literature': the literature

of imitation and decorativeness, as well as a comment on Gibrān's Al-Ajnihah al-Mutakassirah. Behind Nu'aimah was a rather rich cultural background, if compared with other immigrant Arab writers and poets. The comparison he must have been making with European literature, especially Russian,[154] must have been the cause of the firm and clear ideas he had, right from this first article, on the necessity of drastic change in literature, even of a literary revolution.

His writings in Al-Funūn which followed this first article were all on criticism, and seem to have been immediately appreciated[155] by readers and by other literary figures in North America. 'Arīḍah even writes to him in 1914, only two years after the publication of his first article, to say that his articles had made Al-Funūn popular in Syria, Egypt and the Southern Mahjar.[156] When Al-Funūn was suspended from publication in 1914 owing to financial reasons,[157] he continued to publish in other North Mahjar papers.[158]

In 1916, however, Al-Funūn came back to life[159] only to be finally suspended again during the war, and Al-Sā'iḥ, whose editor was 'Abd al-Masīḥ Ḥaddād, another former schoolmate of his, became the platform for al-Mahjar literature including Nu'aimah's critical writings.[160] These writings, which were mostly bent on establishing a real change in the form, language, attitudes and methods of approach of Arabic poetry, greatly helped to sow the seeds of change which a critic can detect in the poetry of some of the poets of "Al-Rābiṭah".[161] But although Nu'aimah's influence was really great in this respect, Gibrān's direct example of original literature of a high calibre was tremendous. It is peculiar that Nu'aimah, although mentioning the influence of Al-Funūn on the movement of literary innovation in al-Mahjar,[162] and of al-Rīḥāni,[163] ignores Gibrān's role in this respect throughout this chapter, although he has given Gibrān his right place as a great influence on Arabic literature as a whole.[164]

It is interesting that the first collection of Nu'aimah's critical

articles formerly published piecemeal in Al-Funūn and Al-Sā'ih were published in 1923 in Egypt and not in al-Mahjar. Muḥyi 'l-Dīn Riḍa,[165] a great enthusiast for al-Mahjar literary contribution, was the editor responsible for this publication[166] for which al-'Aqqād wrote the introduction at Nu'aimah's request. Al-Ghirbāl, it must here be emphasised, was not influenced by Al-Dīwān, the book of criticism written in 1921 by al-'Aqqād and al-Māzini. It has already been mentioned that most of its articles had already appeared in the second decade in Mahjar periodicals.[167] It was only in 1922, apparently, that the two avant-garde movements in Egypt and America discovered each other.[163] Before that the two lines of development were advancing along parallel lines, answering the desperate need of Arabic literature at that time to forgo new links and to free itself from crystallized traditional attitudes.[169] Both groups, moreover, had been exposed to Western literary influences. Nu'aimah, on receiving a copy of Al-Dīwān in 1922, had time to include in his collected essays an article on the two volumes of Al-Dīwān in which he hailed the appearance of this criticism in the following curious words:

> "God bless Egypt, for not all that she writes is empty chatter, and not all the verse she produces is mere affectation. I used to think that she ... adored the decorative word and sanctified the /mere/ stringing together of rhymes, for how often she has glorified a clown and ... cheered a fake..."[170]

Apparently, despite his sincere joy in discovering an avant-garde team of critics in Egypt, he is unable to conceal his former lack of admiration for the literature produced there. This not too fair attitude, however, was overlooked by A. al-Dusūqi who spoke of the two movements and carelessly made al-Mahjar authors dependent on the Egyptian critics for their ideas on innovation.[171] Nu'aimah's attitude towards literature in Egypt, it seems, was shared by other members of "Al-Rābiṭah".[172]

Unfortunately, neither Nu'aimah in Sab'ūn, nor Mandūr in Al-Naqd wa 'l Nuqqād al-Mu'āṣirūn, tell us in any detail about the reception of Al-Ghirbāl in Egypt and the Arab world on its publication in 1923, although

Riḍa prophesied a storm of protest.[173] But we know that Nu'aimah sold only twenty copies in al-Mahjar,[174] which is not a criterion but is a sign that these Mahjar poets wrote for a faraway public at home. They knew only too well the shortcomings in literary taste suffered by their immigrant compatriots.[175] However, Al-Ghirbāl seems to have been a popular book, for it has had at least six publications since its first appearance.

In Al-Ghirbāl the contemporary critic can find the roots of many trends in the contemporary approach to poetry, language, metre and the Classical heritage. There is a line of thought connected with the Classical heritage which will be seen to continue, especially in Lebanon, up till the present time, although it was to be interrupted by Marūn 'Abbūd's towering figure and his more informed Classical background.

Nu'aimah, himself, although more cultured than the rest of the members of "Al-Rābiṭah", does not seem to have been particularly knowledgeable in Classical Arabic literature. In his high school the subjects other than Arabic were taught in Russian. In Arabic they studied Kalīlah wa Dimnah and "Alfiyyat Ibn Mālik", and ended by studying the history of Arabic literature as it was written by a Russian Orientalist.[176] He admits that Nasīb 'Arīḍah was the most knowledgeable member of "Al-Rābiṭah" in Classical Arabic literature.[177] Classical Arabic literature was at that time in the process of being re-discovered.* Nu'aimah himself was no scholar of Arabic, and probably he had not acquired a real reverence for the Classical heritage. His readings in foreign literature and his comparatively scant knowledge of the Classical heritage led him to believe in its worthlessness.[178] He was comparing it with the modern European li-

* In fact the Classical heritage is still in the process of discovery. A great amount of sincerity, depth of insight and perseverence are needed to discover its many values. These were obscured in the Revivalist movement by the rather obsolete and sensational taste of those sincere but hard-working revivalists. At a time when Court poetry was still the fashion, it was perhaps natural for them to revive the eulogies which have filled the school anthologies, and to concentrate their efforts more on poetry than on the numerous prose works of a long line of Arab writers and scholars many of whom are still waiting to be revived.

terature. His condemnation of the Classical heritage, (as well as the modern,)[179] has given a new impetus to a trend already mildly begun which became very strong in the fifties, to criticize the old Classical heritage and belittle its contribution.[180]

This brings us to an interesting point of our discussion in this respect. If Nu'aimah's critical efforts ran parallel with the efforts of the Egyptian avant-garde critical activity, and were probably more attractive than the latter, he was not involved, as most of them were, in the application of criticism to poets of the Classical period. His rebellion, which was timely and vital, turned its back on the traditional roots of modern literature and the few examples he gives of Classical poetry here and there in his writings, are not really of consequence. This is the first critical output in Arabic that concentrates only on the modern contribution, but it is the beginning of a new critical trend in modern Arabic criticism. This trend was to lead, especially in the fifties, to a long and wearisome argument among the different schools of thought regarding the value of the Classical heritage and the connection modern poets and writers should have with it. Many futile arguments would take place, and great and rather unintelligent exchange of accusations and often abuse occurred. However, it is not surprising to note that most of those who spoke against the Classical heritage did not know much about it. It was most unfortunate that most of those who spoke for the Classical heritage were old-fashioned and reactionary.

His attack on the importance which his contemporary writers in the Arab world laid on language and their great dependence on the lexicogropher's inflexible attitude to it[181] is quite legitimate. Behind him there was already a growing tradition of belief in the vitality of the spoken language, as we have seen. The looser ties these poets and writers had with the Classical language made it easy, even necessary, for their more adventurous minds to discover the vitality of having a less rigid attitude

towards assimilating into the Classical some colloquial words which seemed to fit the meaning more.[182] It does not seem that Nu'aimah or Gibrān had any conscious connection whatsoever with the call for the use of the colloquial made by some foreigners in Egypt in the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth centuries.[183]

Nu'aimah's arguments on language are often quite informed. "Language is one of life's phenomena and only obeys the laws of life. It chooses the suitable and preserves the best of it. It is like a tree that changes its dead branches for green ones, and its dried leaves for living ones..."[184] Those whom he calls 'the frogs of literature' and who would keep the language from growth make of the writer a tool in the hands of language.[185] Their tragedy is that life goes on while they remain static.[186] But to him, language which is mere symbols, "has no value of its own."[187] It is a means for denoting things that are "greater and loftier" than itself,[188] which are the human thoughts and emotions.[189]

In order to defend his argument, Nu'aimah tends to exaggerate his statements. It must have been these exaggerations that al'Aqqād, in his introduction to the Ghirbāl, found unacceptable.[190] Nu'aimah really meant that although "it is good to pay attention to polishing [the language] and arranging it in such a way as to grant it sweetness and accuracy",[191] we must not forget that it is mere symbols, nor believe it to be perfect in itself.[192] But al-'Aqqād, and Mandūr[193] were taken by an enthusiastic exaggeration of his argument.

Like Gibrān, Nu'aimah believes that it is the poet and writer who are the makers of language and its patrons. There should be no cause for worry if they brought forth some new symbols or changed some old ones.[194] Al-'Aqqād and Mandūr, overlooked the knowledgeable and simple idea he puts at the end of his long argument that if the people liked the newly forged symbol [or word, to be more clear] they would keep it, whether lexicographers and grammarians liked it or not, and if people neglected

it, it would die automatically.[195]

T. Malhas is probably right in saying that Nu'aimahwas the first critic in Arabic who preferred content to form in literature.[196] The history of criticism in Arabic shows the equal value which most Classical critics gave to the two.[197]

It is, of course, natural that when there is a general spiritual bankruptcy, writers and poets turn to the decorative. Embellishments become an exercise of wit when intuition and spiritual communion lie dormant. Nu'aimah, however, did not realize the temporariness of the situation. In fact, he would not have been expected to realize it, for in the history of rebellions, the first two elements required for success are enthusiasm and vehemence, and these two qualities depend on this limited perspective, on this great concentration on a special situation that is given priority over everything.[198]

Nu'aimah's ideas on metre, however, are not quite so mature. He makes many mistakes and falls into some contradictions as he attacks the sham versifiers of his time. His criticism of exaggerations and banality in poetry, which he refers to the laws of prosody, is irrelevant and shows a hasty judgement.[199] Every poetry has its laws of prosody, whether written or orally transmitted. Quantitative metres may have stricter laws but this springs from the very nature of language and the inter-relations of word structure which impose the metres of its poetry. The laws of prosody are not imposed on a language. They are drawn only on the basis of what has already happened in the verse of that language. With the many variations and allowances used early by the poets and then deduced as rules of prosody, the scope is wide for great variety but also for committing mistakes. Laws of prosody, like laws of music, are necessary to help poets in putting under control this last tendency. It is true that good poets in Arabic hardly need to go back to these laws, but there are always poets whose ears are not quite as sensitive. The laws of

al-Khalīl ibn Ahmad need not stop any gifted poet from innovations. They have basic rules which apply broadly to any number of variations within their own potentialities. However, Nu'aimah's arguments are out of focus in this respect. The fact that there were many versifiers in Arabic who wrote banal decorative verse is not due as Nu'aimah claims, to their capacity to versify by applying al-Khalīl's laws of prosody.[200] No poetry can become a corpse of hollow meanings just because laws of prosody are accessable to would-be versifiers. In fact Arabic laws of prosody should be more difficult to assimilate than, say, English laws of prosody. Moreover, there is no well-known poetry of any language which does not have long trains of versifiers and imitators.[201] Nu'aimah, moreover, claims that the accessibility of the laws of prosody have not only harmed our poetry, but also all our literature. For would-be novelists and dramatists, on seeing the possibility of becoming able to write verse (a highly honoured art among the Arabs) through learning the laws of prosody, did exactly that and "here we are today with no novels and no plays and no science...".[202] This is really amazing from an intelligent and sensitive man like Nu'aimah.[203]

But this rebellion against prosody, despite its uninformed background, helped to shake the sanctimony with which metrical laws, recorded by al-Khalīl, were treated. Al-Khalīl's great achievement was really misunderstood by both the traditionalists who held it sacred, and the innovators who spoke about it with irony.[204] Very few people saw it as it really is : a record of the development of Arabic metres which poets, prior to al-Khalīl, had achieved, and a description of their formation.

Probably Nu'aimah was thrown into a chaotic attitude by Gibrān's achievement. He found such poetry in Gibrān's highly poetic prose that he was moved to a comparison with the regularity of rhythm in Arabic metres and found Gibrān's style more attractive.[205] But he never really formed a settled idea on metre and in fact, all his generation was very

unsettled on this same question. For despite the absurdity of the argument above stated in connection with metres, al-'Aqqād remarked only on Nu'aimah's much milder attack on language. It will be shown in the coming chapter how al-'Aqqād did contradict himself with regard to metre. In his old age he took a firm stand against metrical innovations and the introduction of free verse in Arabic, but in his younger days he had condoned metrical innovations.[206]

Nu'aimah shows this uncertainty right from the beginning. For while he says in one article that neither metres nor rhymes are necessary for poetry,[207] he says in another article that metre is necessary but rhyme is not.[208] However, his poetry shows a sensitive ear to music in poetry and a good grasp on metre. And when he tried to define metre he said rightly: "The primary aim of metre is to achieve harmony and equilibrium in the expression of emotions and thoughts."[209]

Nu'aimah is at his best when he speaks about the role of criticism and the role of poetry. To him the aim of criticism is to sift literature and differentiate between the good and bad in it.[210] The personality of the author is of no concern to the critic.[211] Every critic, moreover, has his own sieve.[212] This if of course the attitude of the subjective impressionistic critic, as Mandūr said,[213] although it is hard to see how a critic can ever be completely objective in his criticism, even if he should limit it to an interpretation of the text. Critics, Nu'aimah continues, although they differ from each other, have one common quality among them : a natural power of discrimination.[214] There are three other qualities which a critic can possess: first , a critic can be creative, for he can discover the value of a neglected piece of literary work.[215] Secondly, the critic can also be an original writer, for in discovering the beauty of a literary piece of work he gives to the readers his own concept of beauty and truth.[216] And thirdly, the critic can be a guide, for he can show the creative artist his true path and his worth.[217]

What was, in his opinion, mainly wrong with Arab literature in this respect? It was the lack of good critics. The arbiters of the literary world, he insisted, were sham, timid and ignorant.[218] There is great courage in Nu'aimah's strong stand in this respect.

If this aspect of Nu'aimah's timely attack is no more equally relevant today, other aspects of his criticism are still fresh and alive. His insistence that 'man' is the axis around which literature must revolve is still valid in modern criticism, and was given great importance in the fifties.[219] It would be a futile argument to say that most poetry, even in Nu'aimah's early days spoke about things that had to do with 'man'. What Nu'aimah meant is what the modern critics mean now : 'Man's inner soul' and his actual experience on earth.[220]

But a great change has taken place in the ideas of critics with regard to the "criteria of literature", since Nu'aimah wrote his famous article of the same title.[221] There are literary criteria, in his opinion, which are permanent because they depend on permanent human needs. These needs are primarily four : Our need to express our feelings and ideas, our need for a guiding light in life to show us the truth, our need for the beautiful (he is speaking here of absolute truth and beauty), and our need for music.[222] These needs do not vary in their essence with the change in time and place.[223] The literary criteria, therefore, are judged by their capacity to satisfy those needs.

Nu'aimah is not quite sure about his idea of the role of poetry. He is aware of the two schools of thought existing in his days, the first of which insists that art is for art's sake, and the other that it should serve the needs of humanity.[224] However, he insists that the poet must not be a slave to his own time and to his own people, but at the same time he must not shut his eyes and ears to the needs of life, writing only what his inspiration prompts him to write. However, he gets out of this impasse quickly by stating that the poet, as long as he takes the nourishment

of his talent from life will necessarily reflect that life in his poetry.[225]

This is one of the earliest examples of the very long controversy on committed literature which flared into a battle of wits in the fifties, prompted mainly by the writers of the neo-Realistic school and other patriots.

But despite Nu'aimah's wavering ideas with regard to 'committed literature' (a term unknown in Arabic in those days), his basic criteria of literature are not really obsolete, although to talk about some of them today may seem rather old fashioned. The need to express oneself, the need for beauty, truth and music are still basic needs in literature and art (if we exchanged the word 'music' for the word 'harmony'), whether this art is socially minded or not. The most which contemporary critics can say about Nu'aimah's early ideas is that they are deficient.

As usual with critics of his time, Nu'aimah's main interest in criticism was poetry. The authors whose work he criticized were poets, and it was on poetry that he lavished his most glorious definitions, in Romantic fashion. "Poetry is life, in its smiles, its tears, its silence, its expression, its cheering, its moaning.."[226] It is the answer to a spiritual need in man,[227] and in fact "the poet is the one who stretches the fingers of his inspiration to the [curtains] of your hearts and thoughts and lifts them to let you see what is hidden under them; then you shall see emotions and thoughts which you might think are the poet's, but which are in fact your very own."[228] For the poet is a "prophet, a philosopher, a painter, a musician and a priest."[229] This Romantic picture of the role of the poet is strengthened by Nu'aimah's belief in inspiration. "The true poet never writes except when he is driven by an internal impulse that he cannot control. In this he is a slave."[230] Moreover, "he will describe what his spiritual eye sees and what has matured and fermented in his heart."[231] This reminds one of the insistence of recent avant-garde criticism on experience in poetry.

Yet Nu'aimah has no hesitation in expressing his sorrow at the fact that most men of letters in Egypt, Lebanon and Syria were "blaring trumpets and bubbles floating on the surface of our literary life."[232] The poets were expressing what they did not feel,[233] and in fact they were "still looking for the foam and bubbles of life."[234] Indeed the whole nation "has been talking with its tongue, while its heart was silent."[235]

An iconoclast of the first order, his strongest advice was to do away with the traditional idols, to find the way to truth and authenticity. "Clear your temples of wooden idols to which you have been burning your incense..."[236] and "build in your hearts new temples for new gods, and lofty pulpits for lamps that burn with the oil of truth, zest and sincerity."[237]

Despite a general critical gloom, there is charm and sincerity in Nu'aimah's early writings unequalled among his contemporary critics. He seemed to be an Arab listening post overseas for Arab talent everywhere: Egypt, the South Mahjar, Syria and North Mahjar. He brought out to the open the sheer pleasure of breaking rigorous taboos in language and the poetic concept. The zest to teach, to pave the way, to open up new horizons is hardly ever marred by the bitterness arriving at direct abuse which makes al-'Aqqād's criticism sensational and often repulsive. His attack on Shauqi is perhaps too prejudiced.[238] Shauqi is depicted here, not as a revivalist of the best of the Classical output, but as an instrument of traditional hangover. However a few deviations cannot spoil the overall picture. The reader can still react to the creative approach and the enthusiasm without failing to realize the drastic attitude Nu'aimah's words must have represented in those days.[239] Yet, despite the interest they can arouse nowadays in the educated reader, a feeling that they are a part of a bygone era persists in most of them. One continuously feels that Nu'aimah is speaking to simple inexperienced but obstinate readers, whom he must strive to convince. This is the cause of

his long and sometimes over-simplified explanations, but this is also one of the elements that give his writings their charm. He was helped in clarifying his critical methods by a great volubility and fluency of style. His method of explaining his ideas does not appeal directly to the emotions, as did Gibrān's. He wrote objectively instead, appealing to the common sense of the reader. His essays follow a special method : they are divided into sections that seem to grow organically towards an end. Beginning with a logical introduction, he builds on it, giving details, clarifying his points through argument and sheer common sense until he arrives at the natural conclusion. One point in his prose persists also in his poetry : the many detailed variations and examples he gives, in short, often parallel phrases, on the same idea. Examples of this are unnecessary here, for all his writings abound with it.

The staunch rebel of the early decades seemed, however, incapable and unwilling to adapt to changing conditions. His basic idea of the aims of poetry and literature to express beauty, truth and goodness persisted with him for a certain length of time then later became clouded through an increasing mysticism. When he wrote his famous article, "Māhiyyat al-Adab wa Muhimmatuhu",[240] he still believed in those criteria[241] and launched his attack on three contemporary trends; firstly, the neo-Realistic trend (he never named it as such) which revolved around what he called Man's need to be free from hunger, (for him, man does not live by bread alone, and that although it is treasonable of literature to forget about /hunger and poverty/, it is even more treasonable to...forget about the hunger of the heart, the mind and the spirit).[242] Secondly, he attacked the literature which revolved around sex, and the physical passions (saying that no one denied the great effect of the sexual passions but that they were only dirt and prostitution when measured against the great aims of man's existence in this world).[243] And thirdly, he attacked the committed literature, without actually using the term, that

revolved in the orbit of state, nationism and politics.[244]

In this article, however, he was able to reflect contemporary difficulties in other things. He insisted that Arabic literature was still immature and would remain so until three things were secured: Firstly a tractable language;[245] secondly, a nation free of inferiority complex, (he attacked here the blind adoption by poets and writers of Western criteria, methods and ideals).[246] Thirdly, freedom of speech.[247]

But the contradictions into which Nu'aimah falls with regard to his former literary criteria can be exasperating. For, while he condoned, in his Sab'ūn, II, his former ideas in Al-Ghirbāl;[248] he had rejected them, in mystical fashion some years before, at a great Arab literary conference.[249] In this conference, in which he delivered a lecture entitled "Al-Adīb wa 'l-Nāqid",[250] he declared that there can be no critic capable of distinguishing beauty, truth and goodness in a work of literature, for each critic has his own personal criteria,[251] that criticism was not really necessary for literature, and that time can be the best judge of literary works.[252] Then, going deeper into a mystical fervour, he advised critics to try to write their own books instead of writing about other people's works, for after all, life can embrace all writers and poets, the good ones and the bad, and there is no need to be heated about what we do not like in other people's works. He gives here the example of Nature which embraces all creatures and rejects none.[253]

What Nu'aimah calls "personal criteria", G. Santayana would call "subjective human knowledge". He says about the attitude of a mystic, "If the data of human knowledge must be rejected as subjective, how much more should we reject the inferences made from that data by human thought. The way of true wisdom, therefore, if true wisdom is to deal with the Absolute, can only lie in abstention..." The relativity of a category of thought is a reason for its rejection. A mystic would therefore "aspire to see, reason and judge in no specific or finite manner - that is,

not to see, reason or judge at all;" which brings him nearer to the Infinite.[254] Nu'aimah's above-mentioned example matches perfectly this attitude described by Santayana, this "tendency to obliterate distinction."[255] "Nothing is (really) right or wrong, because in Nature all things are regular and necessary..."[256] The similarities between Santayana's descriptions of a mystical attitude[257] and Nu'aimah's ideas in his lecture cannot fail to suggest an eruption of mystical fervour on Nu'aimah's part before the preparation of this lecture, especially because of the contradictions in concept with other recent writings of his, as has already been mentioned. The strangeness and elevation of character such an attitude suggests[258] might have been an incentive to Nu'aimah. However, his fellow delegates did not quite realize the mystical basis of the old critic's attitude, and his lecture caused a great deal of havoc at the conference.

If Nu'aimah had wanted to shock the audience, he could not have said anything more at variance with the whole mood of the era. He seemed a strange and out-of-this-world voice trying to tell an Arab world plunged in the heated arguments of committed literature in the fifties, to accept everything given to it. In this lecture he not only imposed on himself an isolation of spirit, but also diluted all his former critical concepts and destroyed, to a great extent, the beloved image of the iconoclast who was so much in the lead when the spiritual and artistic needs of his people were a pressing obsession in the earlier decades of this century.[259]

It is a rather strange fact that Nu'aimah was able to survive and keep on writing (and selling his books) in this era, when the interests of the majority loom far away from his mystical attitudes.[260] Thurayya Malhas, in her book on him,[261] seems herself unaware of these opposing currents of Arab life, or of the impossibility of an authentic general reaction to Nu'aimah's main theme in recent years. She writes ardently, sometimes passionately, about Nu'aimah's mystical outlook on life and literature.[262]

Although Nu'aimah is primarily a prose writer, he was able, unlike Gibrān, to assert himself as a poet (in verse) through a few but highly effective poems. One must be able to try to visualize the condition of Arabic poetry in the first three decades of this century in order to be able to estimate fully the value of the poetic experiment of those North Mahjar poets. Nu'aimah's "Al-Nahr al-Mutajammid" and his famous "Akhī" both written in 1917,[263] are marvellous examples of the attempt of a poet ill at ease in a complicated and powerfully established poetic heritage.

But Nu'aimah wrote his poetry (in Arabic) only within a limited period (1917-26). His spiritual tendencies, which increased gradually with the years, his natural inclination to explain the details of his ideas, to illustrate and elucidate what he is describing with numerous examples, the intellectual basis of his literary output, all these were bound to divert him from the path of poetry and to lead him to express himself in the more voluble medium of prose.

Nu'aimah's poetry was new. The novelty was both in the content and in the technique. His themic adventures, however, were mostly of the meditative kind, saved only by an ardour of emotion which proves an authentic spiritual tendency. All his poems, except "Akhī" were of the directly subjective type written to express the poet's inner personal experience, spiritual[264] and emotional.[265] "Akhī" could well belong to the poetry of the fifties, with its social consciousness expressed through the personal consciousness of the poet. It is important to note Nu'aimah's tendency to write about a true experience, an element lacking in the poetry of the neo-Classicists, including much of Muṭrān's.[266] It is important also to record here the authenticity of his meditative basis, a quality which may be lacking in some other examples of North Mahjar poetry of the meditative type. Nu'aimah must be seen as an impressive influence on his colleagues, a fact that does not rule out that his own authentic spiritual attitude was itself influenced by Gibrān's pervasive influence.

His spiritual themes, which increased in their meditative attitude through the few years in which he wrote poetry, until he was able to arrive with them at a mystical expression of his beliefs,[267] were accepted by the Arab world without much effort, despite their novelty. Nu'aimah was writing his poetry during one of the most exciting periods of the Arab modern literary history. During this period it was possible to impose on the reading public a great variety of themes, as long as it did not touch the basic dogma of religion, the sanctimony of the heritage or the jealously guarded code of honour; for the first four decades of the century are marked by a rare freedom to experiment, by what can be termed an "individual sensibility".[268]

The main change achieved by Nu'aimah in his poetry was a change in the poetic tone. The mystical trend in him increased with the years and although it was an important and interesting motif in his poetry, the achievement of a new and more subdued tone is a real victory for poetry at the time. The great resonance of the neo-Classical poetry disappears here. Even Gibrān's passionate rhetoricism seems pompous and pretentious if compared with the gentle and rather sad tones of Nu'aimah's poetry which flows like the ripples of a gentle stream. Mandūr, Egypt's foremost critic in the forties, was greatly moved by it even after three decades.[269]

Nu'aimah confirmed Gibrān's adoption of Nature as an object of spiritual love and spiritual experience. Nu'aimah's spirit merged in it with awe or wonder. To him, it was evocative of emotions and spiritual yearnings.

Nu'aimah enjoyed early a great popularity as a poet and short story writer in the Arab world. When Majmū'at al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah was published in 1921, it contained five of Nu'aimah's poems. These and other poems in the collection were memorized by the growing generation in the Middle East and their influence was great on the second generation of poets in the Arab world.

ʿAbbās and Najm are probably right in their suggestion that Nuʿaimah's poetry may have been influenced by the Lebanese folk-song.[270] Nearly all the mountain people in the Lebanon memorize these songs which cover many happy and sad aspects of life. The Lebanese folk song is characterized by its details and its repetitive phrases that revolve around the same meaning, giving it several aspects.[271] Nuʿaimah's poetry shows an exhaustive insistence on detail, which is an anti-poetic characteristic.[272] However, it must be remembered too, that Nuʿaimah's prose shows also this same characteristic, as has already been mentioned. His wish to express everything in his mind, or at least to give many sides to the same object or idea treated in the poem may be the cause of the simplicity of his language in poetry, a simplicity more characteristic of prose than of verse. One cannot fully agree with ʿAbbās and Najm in their suggestion that the parallelisms of his style were caused by his prosaic tendency,[273] for the short sentences or phrases he crowds into his poems are not always prosaic. Classical poetry abounds with parallelisms and anti-thesis. Nuʿaimah, however, exceeds anything known before or after him in this, showing this tendency also in his prose, although there is a longer history of such a style in Classical Arabic prose.[274] This is, in fact, a persistent trend throughout his poetry, but perhaps the most flagrant example of it is his poem "Ibtihālāt"; the following is a typical extract:

في غنا البلبل ، في ندب الغراب 275
في دبيب النمل ، في هب الرياح
في طنين النحل ، في زعق العقاب
في صراخ الليل ، في همس الصباح
في بكا الاطفال ، في ضحك الكهول
في ابتهالات العراة الجائعين
في انتحاب الناى ، في دق الطبول
في صلاة الملك والعبد السجين
واذا ما قرب الموت ووافاها الصمم
فاختمن ربي عليها ريثما تحيا الرمم

To sum up Nu'aimah's poetic achievement, the poet , when dealing with the poetry of contemplation which mirrors the moods and the inner states of mind, arrived at a high degree of fluency and charm, a real achievement in view of the difficulty with such poetry to remain poetical. He decisively achieved a basic change of tone in his poetry. Ilyā Abū Māḍi who will be studied presently, fluctuated all his mature life between the tone of meditation and confession and the tone of rhetorical poetry. Moreover, Nu'aimah developed the poetry of experience and paved his way, in all his poems, to truth and authenticity. In his poetry he came closer to the language of daily speech and of the simple song than did any of his contemporaries. Unlike al-'Aqqād, Shukri and al-Māzini, Nu'aimah was able to give through his poetry a successful example of his literary criteria.[276] His poetry with its message of altruistic Love:

277 واجعل اللهم قلبـــي
واحة تسقي القريـــب
والغريـــــب
مأوها الايمان ،اما غرسهـــــا فالربا والحب والصبر الطويـــــل
جوها الاخلاص ، اما شمسهـــا فالوفا والصدق والحلم الجميـــل

its dualistic attitudes towards life and death:

278 حدثيني عن نفخـــــة جعلت آدم حيـــــا وكان ترابـــا ومـــــــــاء
يا لها نفخة ارتنا بصيصـــا في ظـــلام البقا فزدنـــــا عمنـــــــــاء
ما لبسنا الحيـــاة حتى لبسنا فـــي ثنايا ثـــــوب الحيـــاة الفنـــــــاء
فغدونا اذا ربونـــا عزاء صـــــارذاك الرجـــاء فينـــــــا بـــــلاء

and towards good and evil,[279] love and hate:

280 قدمـــــت حبي لمبغضيّ لقاء ما قد جنـوا عليـــــــــا
فكان حظي من مبغضيـــــا ان عاد حبـــي بغضا اليّـــــا

is a further confirmation of both Sufi and Christian literary traditions.

But despite its many achievements, Nu'aimah's poetry was also an example of dilution and verbosity, as was Gibrān's poetic prose style. Arabic poetry would struggle for a long time to rid itself of the effects of a diluted style, greatly confirmed by some of the North Mahjar contribution.

Al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah:

One of the most important literary societies to be established by Arab writers and poets in modern times is the society of "Al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah", which was founded in New York in 1920. It was composed of a small and rather select group of avant-garde men of letters who, although differing in artistic level and output,[281] all believed in the necessity of change and the introduction of new tools and new attitudes into literature.[282] The poets in the group were six, namely Gibrān, Mīkha'īl Nu'aimah, Nasīb 'Arīḍah (d. 1946), Rashīd Ayyūb (1871-1941), Nudrah Ḥaddād (1881-1950), and Īlyā Abū Māḍi (1889-1957). Abū Māḍi was not present at the inaugural meeting of "Al-Rābiṭah", but joined it later on.[283] Its members unanimously chose Gibrān to be chairman and, until his death in 1931 he was its guiding spirit. Nu'aimah was its councillor and the critic who voiced its opinions and principles and established, in writing, its literary criteria.[284]

The most important achievement of this society was its presentation of a unified outlook on literature and art, and its introduction into Arabic literature of a new, adventurous and successful literary experiment based on avant-garde principles. In "Al-Rābiṭah" as an avant-garde society, its selectiveness and exclusiveness stand perhaps unique in the history of modern Arabic literary societies. The Apollo poetic society, for example, which was founded in Egypt in 1932 on avant-garde principles, had to compromise with the forces of conventionalism, as in making Shauqi its honorary chairman. The "Shi'r" group, which formed itself in 1957 in Lebanon, despite its most courageous stand against outdated conventionalism, did publish sometimes for poets in whose methods it did not believe, such as Badawi al-Jabal and G. Ṣaidaḥ.[285] There is a greater purity of attitude and practice in "Al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah". Perhaps its existence in a remote country, where the direct prestige and contact with entrenched traditionalism could be avoided, made it more possible for its

leading members to be as selective as they were.

The influence of "Al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah" as a movement on Arabic poetry was great. A line of truth and a line of feeling were achieved. New attitudes towards life, man and his condition on earth were adopted. Greater flexibility of language, metre and rhythm and a pronounced change of tone were achieved. The Arab world, we know from written reports on the subject,[286] and from oral reminiscences that have lasted even up to the present time, showed very great interest in the publications of this society. These appeared in Al-Sā'iḥ magazine (whose editor, 'Abd al-Masīḥ Ḥaddād, was a member) and in the collection of stories, poems and essays by its members published in 1921 and entitled Majmū'at al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah. Looked at even after nearly half a century, this important collection still seems an achievement of modern Arab literary creativity. It gained great circulation and brought fame and recognition to many of the poets and writers who published in it.[287]

Two magazines in North Mahjar:

Two platforms had facilitated the circulation of the avant-garde poetry and poetic theory of the group who eventually formed "Al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah". These were the magazines Al-Funūn and Al-Sā'iḥ. Al-Funūn, edited by the poet Nasīb 'Arīḍah, was a select magazine,[288] dedicated to the advancement of modern Arabic literature. It began publication in 1912, was suspended in 1914 for financial reasons, was re-issued in 1916 for two more years, then was suspended permanently in 1918.[289] It was then that these poets started publishing regularly in Al-Sā'iḥ, a fortnightly magazine of a lower artistic calibre than Al-Funūn,[290] which remained their platform until 1931.[291] Owned and edited by 'Abd al-Masīḥ Ḥaddād (1890-1963), a member of "Al-Rābiṭah" and the brother of poet Nudrah, it published the work of these poets and writers faithfully and used to issue special annual numbers (editions) dedicated to the publication of their works,[292] but was to meet too, in its life-time, many financial

difficulties.[293]

Īlyā Abū Māḍi:

Īlyā Abū Māḍi is the most famous poet in "Al-Rābiṭah" and the most widely read among all the expatriate poets in the Americas.[294] He was the first poet in Arabic, to introduce /thorough/ innovations in the Arabic poem, in the modern sense of the word.[295] His poetry is termed the beginning of modern Arabic verse[296] and a literary critic regards it as the start of a period.[297]

Īlyā Abū Māḍi began his poetic career very early in life. It was in his early twenties that he issued his first collection of poems, Tadhkār al-Māḍi (1911). He was then in Egypt, having emigrated there from Lebanon when he was a boy of eleven. It is said that this first collection caused very harsh criticism in Egypt for linguistic and prosodical causes.[298] This may well have happened for it was a typical method of criticism with several Egyptian literary arbiters in the first decades of this century, and even now. In this diwan a traditional poetic education is betrayed. Its poetry shows "a strong poetic talent, a sharp memory and a great capacity for stringing together words and rhymes..."[299] but little modern sensibility, and little creativity. Between this early volume of the young poet and the famous great poems of the mature Abū Māḍi, there is a considerable gap and a tremendous growth in sensibility as well as a revolutionary innovation in the use of the poetic tools. But despite the great change that was to take hold of him even before the end of the second decade, he was never able to get rid of some traditional affinities[300] which, when not actually in the foreground, loomed almost continually in the background giving him both a traditional strength of language and an occasional staleness of vision.[301] Indeed, from this point of view, Abū Māḍi is one of the most interesting poets in modern Arabic, for he arrived at a fine degree of modernity without ever achieving a divorce from traditional roots. During those moments when his

acquired modern sensibility was able to assert itself, the strength of his traditional affinities submerged itself and blended harmoniously with modern attitudes. But later, his traditional self would re-assert itself very strongly in his poetry, a fact which Nāzik al-Malā'ikah recognized, although she did not attempt to explain.[302]

He emigrated from Egypt to America in 1911[303] and in 1916 was already in New York[304] where the rest of the members of "Al-Rābiṭah" with the exception of Nu'aimah, had already been. Nu'aimah came there shortly afterwards and Abū Māḍi fell under his influence and no doubt under that of Gibrān as well. His second diwan entitled, Dīwān Īlyā Abū Māḍi, which came out in 1919, shows the result of his new contact with these avant-garde poets. "After his connection with the rebellion against fossilization and traditionalism..." as Nu'aimah puts it, he underwent a great change in his poetic sensibility.[305] According to Nu'aimah the influence came after he, Nu'aimah, started writing in Al-Funūn and Al-Sā'iḥ and after he published his two poems "Al-Nahr al-Mutajammid" and "Akhī".[306] Gibrān, as an influence here, is not mentioned by Nu'aimah. However, the important thing is that the change towards a deeper, more modern sensibility was achieved to some extent, before the appearance of his second collection in 1919. This volume contained his two famous poems "Falsafat al-Ḥayāt"[307] and "Lam Ajid Aḥadā"[308] which mark, among others, this mushroom-like growth of the poetic self in Abū Māḍi. As one example of his traditionalism in another poem, he had written in 1916 a poem entitled "1916"[309] about the war, which is marked by lack of unity, conventional philosophizing and stock emotions. Most of the poems in this collection are of this kind. It is interesting to note that Abū Māḍi dedicates this volume to a Syrian merchant whom he compares in a little poem to the 'stars' and the 'rain' (an old Arab image for a generous man),[310] because this merchant had volunteered to publish the diwan. This very dedication which must have been written

just before publication proves that Abū Māḍi was not yet as revolutionized nor as completely wooed to the new poetry as Nu'aimah would like to make out.[311] However, this volume furnished a very interesting study of the influence of a much needed new poetic concept on a poet with a traditional education but with a very special talent. Īlyā Abū Māḍi's peculiar genius showed itself to be a capacity to assimilate new concepts and immediately mould them into poetic creativeness. It is also interesting to see Gibrān writing the introduction to this volume.[312] Gibrān, for reasons that we can conjecture, chose to write most of this short introduction about poetry and the poet in general, jotting at the end only about three lines on Abū Māḍi in which he apparently chose to assess the good poetry and overlook the many poems written in traditional style. In this diwan, he said, "there are threads that bind the outer phenomena of life to its inner secrets."[313] Indeed there was in certain few poems a very deep change from the direct pedanticism of a poet who superficially preached to his people wisdom and professed knowledge and who wrote flat, static and sprawling poems,[314] to the new poet who replaced the short direct epigram with deep contemplation and with poems growing organically from a point of thought to a point of crisis.[315]

The poetic creativity of Abū Māḍi flourished greatly in the twenties. Even before Al-Jadāwil, his third and best volume, appeared in 1927, the young readers of the Arab world were already memorizing his very popular poem "al-Masā'", published in 1921 in Majmū'at al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah. The fluidity of style, the gentle melancholy, the soft musical tones bear no similarity to any of his traditional poems published previously. Indeed it would be difficult even for an expert to recognize the same poet in this poem and in, say, "Suqūṭ Aradrūm" in his second diwan.

Al-Jadāwil contained the cream of Abū Māḍi's poetry. Nu'aimah wrote its introduction this time and he hailed the 'great change' in Abū Māḍi.[316] The experiment in Al-Jadāwil included both form and conten

and carried with it the mark of a superior and highly adaptable talent, hiding to a great extent the novelty of Abū Māḍi's conversion. It is the poetry in Al-Jadāwil that is usually meant when critics discuss the attributes or influence of Abū Māḍi. The appearance of Al-Khamā'il in 1940 showed that the poet's modern sensibility was not deep enough to last him a life-time. There were too many poems steeped in traditionalism, abounding with stock images and stock emotions and following traditional patterns of form. Almost every poem in Al-Khamā'il is monorhymed and stretches flatly without much attempt at real unity or organic growth. The poet's previous concern in Al-Jadāwil to interpret his ideas in suggestive, often oblique methods in which he might resort to allegory, pictorial images or narrative is replaced here in most poems by the direct flat epigram which is included in one single verse, in traditional poetic fashion. A flagrant example of this is his poem "Kun Balsaman"[317] where the very title implies the didactic attitude. The poem starts by giving advice after advice to the reader (or listener) to love, and arguing the importance of loving. It is a completely mental exercise of reasoning and altogether devoid of experience.

A volume entitled Tibr wa Turāb was published posthumously in 1960 at Beirut. In this volume Abū Māḍi's relapse to traditional themes, moods, structures and attitudes is immediately apparent. The spirit of the prophet of beauty and love is replaced in some poems by bitterness and self-exhibitionism, which although detectable right from the beginning in his early poetry and even in Al-Jadāwil[318] is far more flagrant here and does not seek to hide itself behind poetic devices. A good part of Tibr wa Turāb, moreover, is made up of poems of occasion,[319] which is indeed a very drastic relapse.

The real conflict in Abū Māḍi was between an original and an acquired attitude. He was sensitive enough to adopt an attitude which

had made itself dominant and to identify himself, temporarily, with it. But his basic realism always found its way towards the solution of any conflict that might impose itself. It was intelligence and a great poetic power that gave an authentic tone to his experiment with these new ideas, especially the idea of the Forest and the trend towards Nature, both adopted from Gibrān and Nu'aimah. It is a seemingly innocent and Romantic Abū Māḍi who believes that Love permeates Nature[320] and that it is possible to achieve joy and happiness by being in harmony with Nature and its movement.[321] But this view could not, nor did it, last with him for long. Abū Māḍi's realistic nature quickly realized how bored he was with both the populated world of men (which embodies ugliness, hypocrisy, haughtiness and servitude)[322] as well as with the silence of the Forest:

انما نفسي التي ملّت العمـــران ملت في الغاب صمت الغـــاب
فانا فيه مستقل طليـــــــق وكأني ادبّ في ســـــــرداب 323

and he comes to the realistic conclusion that life cannot give a true solution to man on earth.[324]

علمتني الحياة في القفر انـــي ـ اينما كنت ـ ساكن في التـــراب
وسأبقى ما دمت فـــي قفـــر الضلال عبد المنى اسيـــر الرغـــاب 325
خلت اني في القفر اصبحت وحـدى فاذا الناس كلهم في ثيابـــي

Dualisms between the heart and the mind, between Nature and the world of men, conflicts and doubts are not basic in Abū Māḍi's well-integrated personality and fundamentalist attitude. The contradictions, which permeate his poetry, do not seem to be the contradictions of a genuinely philosophical mind but are rather the natural result of a clash within a personality whose established basis of thought and belief have been attacked and almost violated by a completely new way of thinking and new attitudes. These new attitudes were aligned to modernism, a superior culture, and an avant-garde attitude towards literature and life. Abū Māḍi's intelligent and impressionistic mind responded quickly to this onslaught which must have seemed to him more of a challenge than anything else. This is why his dualisms are flat[326] and hollow and furnish no real stage for conflict. There certainly seems to be no real

intellectual or spiritual basis to support them as we find in Nu'aimah and Gibrān.

His realistic basic attitude betrays itself sometimes in his best poems. A clarity of attitudes, e.g. his well defined attitude towards the heart and the mind in "Baina Maddin wa Jazr",[327] shows the basic lack of conflict in him.[328]

'Abbās and Najm have spoken at length on Abū Mādi's realism and there is no necessity to go into further details about it.[329] However, other ideas which they did not mention or which they appear to have misconceived must be discussed here.

Probably the first of these is the conception of the authors that Abū Mādi's poem is usually the outcome of a psychological crisis.[330] Whereas this is true of certain poems like "Al-Kamanjah al-Muḥaṭṭamah"[331] and "Lam Ajid Aḥadā",[332] it does not seem to be the case in most of his poems. The idea must have arisen in their minds from the sustained sentiment one finds in his poems,[333] which is the particular poetic attribute of Abū Mādi. This poet's genius is marked by his capacity to stir in his poems an emotion which might not be the result of real experience, but an instinctive device in him to raise an idea which attracts him to the level of poetry by supporting it with the necessary emotions. The greatest number of his poems, even in Al-Jadāwil are not poems of experience but poems of ideas. The ideas are conceived in the poet's mind, then clothed with imagination and emotion as well as with other devices such as parable, allegory and narrative, and released as poetry. If we examine the poems of Al-Jadāwil we see that this applies to most of them. One of his more famous poems in this volume is "Al-'Anqā'".[334] This is a poem about Happiness which he seeks everywhere, asking the dawn about it, the stars, the sea; going into the palaces of the rich only to find them empty of it (a banal meaning), then resorting to asceticism to find it, but all in vain. Thinking that Happiness must

then be the daughter of dreams, he gives himself up to sleep to discover that dreams, too, can be cruel and frightening. Youth and maturity, moreover, furnish no means to Happiness. Then finally, as his spirit bursts into a flood of tears, he finds, only too late, that it has always been there, within his spirit.

The poem is beautifully enriched with concrete images that qualify an abstract thought, and with a sustained emotion. There is, moreover, a rhythmical smoothness and a poetic glow that catch the heart right from the beginning. But these essential elements do not, and cannot, cover up the fact that the poem is basically built on a philosophic idea (the idea that Happiness dwells in the spirit of man) and not on a true experience.

But this poem is marked by the growth in structure and organic unity.[335] This is one of its greatest achievements and in fact one of the greatest achievements of most of the poems of the diwan. The next poem, for example, "Al-Sajīnah"[336] also grows organically and is held poignantly by the same sustained emotion. However, the subject matter is highly affected and the sorrow for the flower imprisoned in the vase, which is the subject of the poem, is unconvincing, or at least uninspiring. Abū Mādi leaves little scope for Symbolism in this poem and writes directly about the plant and its (supposed) plight,

سيطرحك الانسان خارج داره　　اذا لم يكن فيك العشيق طيب
فتمسين للاقذار فيك ملاعب　　وفي صفحتيك للنعال ضروب　　337
اسارك يا اخت الرياحين مفجع　　وموتك ،يا بنت الربيع ،رهيب

but concludes with the usual epigram with which he often dramatically ends his poems:

ولكنها الدنيا ،ولكنه القضا　　وهذا لعمري مثل تلك غريب
فكم شقيت في ذى الحياة فضائل　　وكم نعمت في ذى الحياة عيوب　　338
وكم شيم حسناء عاشت كأنها　　مساوئ يخشى شرها وذنوب

Several poems in this volume are simple allegories and parables. Some like his poem "Al-Hajar al-Saghīr"[339] are very charming; some like "Rīh al-Shamāl"[340] are heavy and affected. The best poems in this diwan, however, are those that approach close to experience and to some personal

revelation such as his lovely poems "Ta'ālī"[341] and "Al-Masā'"[342]. His famous poem "Al-Ṭīn",[343] although appearing to represent an idea (the idea that the rich and the poor, the mighty and the weak alike face the same destiny, a fact which ought to dispel pride on the part of the rich and mighty), betrays a personal involvement, a true conviction and a real intent to denounce the rich and mighty of the world. The poet was to repeat this idea in other poems later,[344] but this poem remains unique among them for its many poetic attributes : the authentic tone, the strong emotion, (an emotion mostly of suppressed suffering) and the pictorial imagination. This last attribute portrays a continuous movement of the objects described (the moving wind, the trembling branches, the clapping waters, the singing birds, the flowing breezes, the swimming stars, the busy bees, the labouring ants, the fluttering butterflies, etc.). The strange and stubborn rhyme e.g. 'adrad' seems to enhance the originality of the poem. Because of the authentic tone one has a subtle suspicion that Abū Māḍi really derides the rich and mighty whose strength and authority must have caused him great suffering. But there is no doubt that his attitude involves at the same time a communal attitude of great authenticity. It is worthy of mention in connection with this poem that its theme and approach suited greatly the mood of the forties and fifties later with their insistence on socialized poetry. 'Abbās and Najm, however, think that its appeal is due to the ascetic Moslem and Christian philosophy existing in Arab society over the centuries.[345] Although it is true that the poem is based on this old motif, its great popularity also coincides with the socialist ideas spreading over the Arab world in the last decades.

In poems like "Al-Yatīm"[346] Abū Māḍi flagrantly betrays his basic didactic attitude which is used more obliquely in his allegories and narratives. In this poem he naively attempts to convince the reader that the orphan is a human being like him, carrying his future in his heart,

and he ends the poem by asking the readers directly to help relieve the misery of the little orphans:

347 حاربوا البؤس في الصغار صغيرا قبل ان يستبدّ فيهم قويّا
كلهم ذلك الجريح الملقّى فلنكن كلنا الفتى "السامريّا"

The poem, moreover, is a relapse to the flat structure of Abū Māḍi's earlier poems. Another poem "Al-Faqīr",[348] is an even worse example of this relapse to flatness and direct didacticism, as well as to the boastful attitude of some of the old poetry:

349 ان يغضبوا مما اقول فطالما كره الاديب جماعة الغوغاء
او ينكروا ادبي فلا تتعجبوا فالرمد يؤلمهم طلوع ذكاء
او كلما نصر الحقيقة فاضل قامت عليه قيامة السفهاء

The lack of unity in this poem, moreover, is an early proof of the inconsistency of Abū Māḍi's poetic experiment and the superficiality of his conversion.

It is his poem "Al-Ṭalāsim"[350] that has gained the greatest fame among his poems probably because of its non-traditionalism, although it is not the most successful from an artistic point of view. In fact it is a sprawling poem, lacking in the organic unity and dramatic approach which are characteristic of Abū Māḍi's more successful poems. In the Khayyam spirit[351] it is much simpler than al-Khayyam's poetry, even in his Arabic translations.* Despite its contemplative and rather sad mood the poem remains a rather bad example of dilution. Like most of Abū Māḍi's poetry, its philosophy is rather superficial. Its apparent agnosticism does not convey a real search for the great metaphysical truths it appears to seek,[352] nor does it express the real anguish of a truly bewildered spirit.

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* The translations of al-Khayyam's Rubā'iyyāt that had appeared in Arabic up to that time were three: Wadī' al-Bustāni's translation (Cairo, 1912), Muḥammad al-Sibā'i's translation (Cairo, 1923) and Aḥmad Rāmi's (Cairo, 1924). Abū Māḍi might have been influenced by one or more of these. There is no reason at all to believe that he was influenced by Fitzgerald's translation as Luwīs 'Awaḍ claims,[353] for none of his biographers mentions any affinities or special readings by Abū Māḍi in English literature.

Despite its fame, "Al-Ṭalāsim" does not seem to have left a real influence on Arabic poetry after Abū Māḍi. It is probable that its unconvincing treatment of the subject,[354] its lack of charged phrases, and its fluctuating poetic level, among other causes, could not impose its theme and ideas on the poetic experiments of the following generations.

One of Abū Māḍi's greatest attributes is his capacity to harmonize a lyricism of high quality with dramatic narratives. The objectivity inherent in all narrations whether direct or epigramatic often dons an emotionalism in his poetry that betrays a personal involvement on the part of the poet.[355] His lovely poem "Yā Shadhāhunna"[356] especially portrays these two attributes as well as his most profound message, that of love:

ان نفسا لم يشرق الحبّ فيهـا هي نفس لم تدر ما معناهـــا
....
انا في الحبّ قد وصلت الى نفسي وبالحبّ قد عرفت اللـــــه

357

These are some of the meanings that raised Abū Māḍi's poetic value. His bulky poetic output offers a good number of memorable poems like this one, that attract the reader by their meanings and ideals as well as by the poet's approach to them.

But unfortunately Abū Māḍi suffers from severe contradictions in his attitudes towards the great values he portrays. The flush of youthful enthusiasm for the finer values of life dwindles at times so much that we see the man who had aspired to be the prophet of life, faith, beauty and love showing this kind of callousness towards old age. He is talking about old women he saw in a hotel at which he stayed:

لمـــن يضـــوع العبيـر ؟ لمن تغنـــي الطيـــــور ؟
لمن تصـفّ القنانـــــي ؟ لمن تصبّ الخمـــــــور ؟
ولا جمال انيـــــق ولا شبـــــاب نضيـــــر
بل موميات عليهـــــا اطالس وحريـــــــر
راحت تقعقع حولـــــي فتّاد عقلـــي يطيـــــر

358

and this inhumane attitude towards the negroes borrowed, of course, by a most impressionistic Abū Māḍi from essential 'white racist' attitudes

in the U.S.:

359

كلّ الذى لاح لي في ارضها حسن ... واحسن الكلّ في عيني اهاليهـــا
الا ذوى السحن السوداء واعجبـا ... اجنّة وذباب في نواحيهـــــا ؟
اني ليكبت روحي ان الاحظهـــم ... بمقلة ابصرت فيها غوانيهـــــا

And this hollow exhibitionism and boastfulness:

360

شكرا لاعدائي فلولا عيشهـــــم ... لم ادر انهمو من الفوفـــــاء
نهش الاسى لما ضحكت قلوبهـــم ... عرس المحبة مأتم البغضـــــاء
ذنبي الى الحساد اني فتّهـــم ... وتركتهم يتعثرون ورائـــــي
وخطيئتي الكبرى اليهم انهـــم ... قعدوا ولم اقعد على الغبـــراء
عفو المروءة والرجولة اننـــــي ... اخطأت حين حسبتهم نظرائـــي

But Abū Māḍi's readers seem to overlook these contradictions and to remember him by his best verses like this one which glorifies beauty:

361

ايهذا الشاكي وما بك داء ... كن جميلا تر الوجود جميـــلا

Not only in ideals and basic attitudes towards life did Abū Māḍi show a profound change over the years, but also in his attitude to Nature. If Nature in Al-Jadāwil was a part of the movement of life around the poet and a great source of inspiration which merged in the heart with the spirit of love and beauty as in his poem "Ta'ālī", or seemed to be a mysterious Being that attracted the poet's spirit as in "Al-Asrār"[362] or was a unifying force in the universe as in "Al-Ṭīn", it became later on a flat object of beauty for only the eye to witness. Abū Māḍi's relapse into an old Arab attitude towards Nature, seeing there only an external object of beauty, was another great proof that his conversion to the ways of Gibrān and Nu'aimah and to their outlook was very superficial. His later poetry shows no attempt at any mystical interpretation of Nature.[363]

Abū Māḍi's great popularity in the Arab world should be a good criterion of modern Arab literary taste, in general. Although he failed to construct an enduring spiritual faith from a pure play of ideas in poetry, this went unnoticed by his contemporaries who were held, as though charmed, by his other appealing attributes. One can perhaps measure the

degree of critical education and the spontaneous growth of Arab literary taste by taking a cross-section of his poetry. One can, for example, realize the insistence of the Arab reading public both on a happy medium between Western and Arab attitudes in poetry as well as between traditionalism and innovation. For Abū Mādi's poetry is "a meeting point between Western and Eastern influences"[364] as well as an equal mixture of traditionalism and modernity. While his best poetry often achieved a novel approach and expressed new attitudes, he never shocked the modern Arab poetic sensibility or tilted the balance of its comprehension of things, ideas and forms. For neither in theme nor attitute nor form did he overstep the boundaries of acceptability of the average readers in the Arab world. In fact his experiment is a pronounced victory of the old two hemistich forms, which include the Muwashshah variations, for he proved them to possess an inherent flexibility which could be moulded and exploited by a skilled innovator. In mood, tone, attitude and general points of view, Abū Mādi is the most basically 'Arab' among the great innovators of the North Mahjar, and the least basically Christian.[365] For he was not normally prone to conflicts and doubts[366] and the philosophical basis in his poetry adopted more or less the basic philosophical attitudes of his people.[367]

This brings us to another important characteristic of his poetry which explains his popularity further, namely the abundance of short all-conclusive wise sayings or epigrams. An old Arab poetic habit, the Arabs still love it, on the whole. It must be remembered here that the attack, launched later on by the avant-garde movement of the fifties on 'wisdom' in poetry and especially on the poetic epigram,[368] was not yet known when Abū Mādi wrote his poetry. The persistent popularity of his poetry only proves that a great number of the Arab reading public was not really influenced by this later attack.

The all-conclusiveness of his epigrams are also linked with another typically Arab poetic attitude, namely that of dogmatic conclusions and statements. It has been mentioned above how Abū Māḍi did not experience the doubts, the dualisms, the uncertainties, of Gibrān and Nu'aimah, who were much more essentially Westernised than Abū Māḍi. This is a very interesting point. For only very few poets, before the fifties, were really able to experience the true conflict of dualistic attitudes or be ever tormented by doubts and real uncertainties. Abū Māḍi's agnosticism in "Al-Ṭalāsim" is unconvincing, as has been mentioned above, because he is basically a man who cannot truly welcome vagueness and uncertainty.[369] Arabic poetry,* from Classical times up to the fifties, with the exception of a very few examples which include some of Gibrān and most of Nu'aimah, has been a poetry of direct portrayal of 'truths' and firm conclusions. Abū Māḍi himself staunchly confirms this attribute. This explains further his popularity, which did not lessen with the years. For the later decades in the Arab world, although they were able to assimilate, with vigour, less dogmatic attitudes in art, and modes of a more sophisticated nature on the one hand, were, on the other hand, subjugated to a new flux of dogmatism in political and national thought which affected the poetic taste to a considerable degree and helped to sustain the popularity of such poets as Abū Māḍi.

Another point of popularity is the choice of allegorical symbols on his part. Unlike some poets of the fifties and sixties, Abū Māḍi did not resort to old Phoenicean myths to illustrate his ideas, but took his symbols from familiar objects mostly from Nature (the fig tree),[370]

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* 'Umar al-Khayyam, writing in Sufist tradition, was able to admit a poetry of 'conflict' and 'unanswered questions' despite his Islamic basis. The dogmatism of Arabic poetry does not appear to spring as much from Islamic certainties of belief and faith as from old Bedouin ways of life and emotional as well as mental attitudes. The strictness, the well-defined ways of life and human relationships in Bedouin life seem to account for this persistent dogmatic attitude, helped, to some extent, by Islam, in its basic dependence on God's will and its attempt at ordering and organizing all aspects of the individual's life.

the little pebble,[371] the frogs,[372] the donkey,[373] etc.) He is really the most folk-loric of the poets of his time. This does not mean that he really resorted to actual existing folk-lore to illustrate his ideas, but that he was able to create, from familiar everyday objects, certain symbols which could be assimilated into folk-lore themselves.[374] The images he borrows from nature usually suit the nature of the Arab world. Often, for example, the Forest becomes 'the wilderness' (al-qafr) in his poetry.

Furthermore Abū Māḍi's poetry often shows a strength of spirit and an optimism greatly needed by a frustrated nation in need to call forth all its spiritual resources. Abū Māḍi's poetry was a good anticipation of ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā's poetry which was to become very popular in the forties with its optimistic spirit and often happy reminiscences of joyful moments spent lavishly - as will be seen. Both poets were able to break through the impasse of Romantic sorrows and accommodate their methods to remarkable evocations of strength, faith and a passionate, happy love of life and beauty; and both cultivated for this a dazzling poetic equipment. Abū Māḍi's stemmed from a Lebanese delight in philosophising and story-telling as well as Lebanese fondness of the play of language.

Abū Māḍi's best poetry is that which he wrote under the influence of the other members of "Al-Rābiṭah". For it must be remembered that despite his modernity, Īlyā Abū Māḍi was not a poet who wrote, except rarely, of true experience. His is essentially a poetry of ideas and very little can be deduced of his life from his poetry.[375]

Despite the real achievement arrived at in Al-Jadāwil, Ṭāhā Ḥusain could not perceive its worth. His criticism[376] of it centred mainly on matters of form and language[377] for which he condemned it far more than this great poet deserved. Ṭāhā Ḥusain also falls into the mistake of talking about Abū Māḍi as one poet in a group. "They are a group", he says, "Endowed with a fertile poetic nature, strong talents and far-

reaching imagination, and are capable of being good poets, but they have not perfected [their grasp on] the poetic tools, have ignored the language, and made this ignorance a law..."[378] Moreover, Ṭāhā Ḥusain goes as far as to say that Īlyā Abū Māḍi does not care at all about music in poetry,[379] which is far from true, for his poetry abounds with music of varying rhythms. Ṭāhā Ḥusain also insists that Abū Māḍi is extremely pessimistic.[380] Although one cannot excuse Abū Māḍi for the occasional mistakes he made in language, because of his strong linguistic basis, one cannot accept Ṭāhā Ḥusain's drastic condemnation of the most important poetic volume that had appeared in modern Arabic poetry up to that time with the exception of Al-Shauqiyyāt. He completely failed to recognize its strength or foresee its future importance.

ʿAzīz Abāẓah's condemnation of all Mahjar poetry on linguistic and structural basis has been mentioned. But the worst came when one of Egypt's foremost contemporary critics, Luwīs ʿAwaḍ, volunteered to write on Abū Māḍi just after his death.[381] In his article on him it is apparent that Luwīs ʿAwaḍ had not studied Abū Māḍi nor discovered his importance and worth. He is unable to discuss his poetry with any clarity or directness or to arrive at any conclusions worthy of mention. No reader of the essay can deduce from it anything concerning Abū Māḍi's poetic attributes, but only that Abū Māḍi, among others, was a 'Romantic' poet.[382] This deficient criticism is a grievous mistake on the part of ʿAwaḍ who is read by a large number of readers. In his article he leans on Ṭāhā Ḥusain's discussion written some thirty years before, quoting his hasty and unstudied statement on the Mahjar poets, as mentioned above,[383] and making a mock attempt at arguing with him but ending by appeasing him at the expense of critical truth. Confirming Ṭāhā Ḥusain's statement that Abū Māḍi and the Mahjar poets ignored the Arabic language, he raises this supposed fault with them to the level of 'crime' on language and metres.[385] This attitude on the part of a contemporary

critic reared in the tradition of modern poetry cannot be overlooked at all. For the renovation of the modern Arabic language was achieved first and foremost at the hands of the Mahjar authors, especially Gibrān and Abū Māḍi.

Nasīb ʿArīḍah:

Another Mahjar poet, Nasīb ʿArīḍah (1887-1946), despite the fact that he was a poet of only medium importance, was able to gain for modern poetry several achievements. In the first place he was a pure Romantic who, without indulging in sentimentalism, was able to arrive at a permanent change in several fundamental poetic elements. If Īlyā Abū Māḍi alternated between the old loud, exhibitionistic tone, and the private and more subdued one which characterized modern poetry in later decades, Nasīb ʿArīḍah achieved a more permanent change of tone. Because he abhored didacticism, his tone is soft and subdued, the tone of a poet given to meditation who indulges in introspective explorations and solliloquies within his own soul.[386] Again, if Abū Māḍi's poetry is characterized by clarity and directness, ʿArīḍah's poetry took a further step towards more obliqueness when the meanings took on a more complex form and were rather implied than clearly pointed. There is the beginning of the use of privately created symbols in the modern, rather than the nineteenth century French poetic tradition:

387

النـــاس من هم ؟ جســـوم ضاعت بهنّ النفـــوس
ان يرقـــدوا فنعيـــم رقادهم فـــي البـــؤوس
وا حسرتا انا منهـــم ما دام جسمي اللبّـــوس
ناموا ونفســـي يقظـــى تهذى بذكـــر الشمـــوس
ترجـــو انتهـــاء اعتقالـــي لكي تقضّ الخيـــام

and to his dead brother:

388

قد ضمّ قـــبرك ما يحـــدّ وان نفســـك لا تحـــدّ
ارجعت عاريـــة الثـــرى وخلعت ثوبا لا يجـــدّ
وكسرت قيـــدك ظافـــرا ما انت بعد اليـــوم عبـــد
وسموت نحو مطالـــع الانـــوار حيث الصبح بيـــدو

The 'sun' he speaks about here is his own creation of a symbol, (and so is the 'morning') but both are easily appropriated by the reader. These symbols are unsupported as Abū Māḍi's symbols are, by allegorical elucidations but are brought forward suddenly and left without any attempt at explaining them. Their true value lies in their inherent capacity of being interpreted richly by the reader.

Yet while Abū Māḍi's meanings remain crystal clear and concretely portrayed, ʿArīḍah's are sometimes prone to vagueness and abstractions:

389 يا اخي يا اخي المصاعب شتى غير انّا في سيرنا غير واحد
فلنسر فلنسر واما هلكنا قبل ادراكنا المنى والمواعد
فكفانا انّا ابتدأنا وانّا ان عجزنا ،فقد بدأنا نشاهد

Abū Māḍi never leaves his meanings so incomplete and so much approaching mysticism.[390]

In fact ʿArīḍah and Abū Māḍi, although belonging to the same school, have many points which form an interesting contrast. Although ʿArīḍah was comparatively free of traditional shortcomings, a quality of which Abū Māḍi could not boast, he never achieved the organic unity of a poem which Abū Māḍi perfected so beautifullly in some of his poetry. ʿArīḍah's poems stretch in equal intensity and hardly grow from one point to an ultimate crisis at the end. They are more like waves that ebb and flow in more or less equal strength.[391]

Again, Abū Māḍi was capable greatly of adopting or inventing an idea and building a poem about it; the actual experiences of his life were very hard to discern through his poetry. ʿArīḍah, on the other hand, although like him wrote mostly on abstract themes, explored his own soul and delved deep into the recesses of his own experiences, coming out at the end, not with a description of the actual experience but with a presentation of the outcome of life's experiences and their effects on his state of mind. In his poetry, therefore, he paved his way to truth, the simple, wholesome true reactions of a genuine spirit that never

preoccupied itself with leaving an impression on the reader. In the line of truth, ʿArīḍah might come foremost among the poets of the North Mahjar, just as Farḥāt comes foremost among the poets of the South.

ʿArīḍah has a collection of poems Al-Arwāḥ al-Hāʾirah, which came out shortly after his sudden death in 1946. He must be remembered as a poet of introspection and of spiritual moods who explored the world of the subconscious.[392] In this he has come a long way from poets like Shauqi who lived in the public eye and were constantly conscious of their roles as public figures. With ʿArīḍah, the separation of poetry from the platform is complete, and the private voice of the poet finds its freest and most uninhibited expression. Although ʿArīḍah did write about some national questions,[393] he never really indulged in the problems of the world outside himself. Yet, despite this his subjects were of universal and permanent value hampered only by the fact that his poetic gift was not rich enough to support the depth and richness of his theme.[394]

FOOTNOTES

1. Published in 1923 in Egypt with an introduction by al-'Aqqād, it was a collection of critical essays on poetry and literature many of which had already been published in papers and magazines in North America, mostly in Al-Funun magazine, in the second decade.

2. M. 'Abbūd, Amīn al-Rīḥāni, Cairo, 1953, pp.48-49.

3. See Al-Ma'rifah magazine, Damascus, February, 1964, p.104 for an interview of 'Abd al-Karīm al-Ashtar with M. Nu'aimah.

4. M. Nu'aimah, Sab'ūn, II, 155-6.

5. Maqdisi, op.cit., p.420; G. Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.121; Jamīl Jabr, Amin al-Rīḥāni, Beirut, 1947, p.52n; M. 'Abbūd, al-Rīḥāni, pp.54, 61 & 119,and others.

6. Jabr, op.cit., p.21.

7. Ibid., p.22; Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.234.

8. See J. Jabr, op.cit., pp.22-3 for an account of his first lecture against religious discrimination (Feb. 9th, 1900); G. Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.135; M. 'Abbūd, Al-Rīḥāni, pp. 22, 53.

9. See an account of the reception of his first important book in Arabic Al-Muḥālafah al-Thulāthiyyah (published 1902), in 'Abbūd, Al-Rīḥāni, p.22, where he quotes G. Ma'lūf asserting that this book gave the extreme blow to a hollow clerical sanctimony and after it normal criticism, hitherto avoided,became possible.

10. See the chapters on his life and career in M. 'Abbūd, Al-Rīḥāni, Jabr, op.cit., pp.9-20; S. Kayyāli, Amīn al-Rīḥāni, Nash'atuhu, Dirāsatuhu,Malāmiḥ min Ḥayātihi, wa Kutubuhu, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1960; M.A. Mūsā, Amīn al-Rīḥāni, Ḥayātuhu wa Āthāruhu, Beirut, 1961.

11. See a personal description of him in M. 'Abbūd, Al-Rīḥāni, p.51, also p.49; and on him as an orator see J. Jabr, op.cit., p.40.

12. Ibid., p.25; M. 'Abbūd, Al-Rīḥāni, p. 55 & 74; G. Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.235.

13. See an account of the reception of Al-Luzūmiyyat in America in M. 'Abbūd, Al-Rīḥāni, pp.9-10; J. Jabr, op.cit., p.29. For an evaluation of his translation of Al-Luzumiyyat, see M. 'Abbūd, op.cit., pp.12-13; J. Jabr, op.cit., pp.29-30; M. Nu'aimah, Al-Ghirbal, pp.163-4.

14. See an account of it in J. Jabr, op.cit., p.71; (M. 'Abbūd however, Al-Rīḥāni, pp.14-15 makes a mistake in presenting this book as two books with slightly different titles: Anāshīd al-Ṣūfiyyah on p.14 and Unshūdat al-Ṣūfiyyīn, p.15.) See also a criticism of this poetic work in M. Nu'aimah Al-Ghirbal, pp.164-7.

15. See M. 'Abbūd, Al-Rīḥāni, p.14; J. Jabr, op.cit., p.70.

16. See M. 'Abbūd, Al-Rīḥāni, pp.15-16 and 96-114 for a lengthy and splendid account on the book; J. Jabr, op.cit., pp.92-6. It was translated into sixteen languages including English, ibid., p.95, and had a great circulation.

17. For his debates and lectures see ibid., pp.102-3; see also G. Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., pp.238-9.

18. Ibid., p.93.

19. For a single example see his speech "Al-Sharq" delivered in Cairo in 1922, Al-Rīḥāniyyāt, IV, 39-48. Written in prose poetry, it stirred great agitation against its literary form (see ibid., p.39) as well as against its boldness, (see M. 'Abbūd, Al-Rīḥāni, p.73). The central theme is this: "I am the Orient; I have philosophies and religions; who would sell me aeroplanes for them?"

20. For a single example see his poetic essay "Min 'Alā Jisr Brooklyn", Al-Rīḥāniyyāt, I, 56-62; it is beautiful in rhythm and expression and is often quoted. The central theme is embodied in this sentence: "When will you turn your face towards the East, O Freedom!" p.59.

21. See an assessment of Al-Rīḥāni's rebellion in R. Khouri, Al-Fikr al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth, p.111.

22. Mulūk al-'Arab, Beirut, 1924, I, 7.

23. 'Abbūd, Al-Rīḥāni, pp.76-8.

24. The friendliness and ease with which he wrote to kings and princes is seen in his letters to the various kings and princes he met and befriended during his travels. These letters are scattered in Rasā'il Amīn al-Rīḥāni, 1896-1940, collected by his brother Albert al-Rīḥāni, Beirut, 1959.

25. Such as Mai Ziyādah; see 'Abbūd, Al-Rīḥāni, pp.23, 24-5; the Iraqians al-Raṣāfi, al-Zahāwi and al-Jawāhiri; see ibid., pp.24-7, see also the many poems addressed to al-Rīḥāni by al-Raṣāfi who seemed quite obsessed by him, in Dīwān al-Raṣāfi, sixth edition, Cairo, 1959.

26. See his booklet Antum al-Shu'arā' Beirut, 1933. It was published after a hot literary litigation in June, 1933, in Lebanon following a speech delivered by al-Rīḥāni at 'Aley National college. (See p.20.) In this speech al-Rīḥāni attacked some famous verses of Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr (Bisharah al-Khouri). See the rather harsh attack of Eduard Ḥunain on it, "Bukā' wa Shi'r wa Naqd", Al-Machriq, Beirut, April-June, 1934, XXXII, ii, 235-60.

27. G. Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.235; J. Jabr, op.cit., p.44 & 69; K. Ḥāwi, Gibrān, p.167.

28. In fact al-Rīḥāni saw a great distance between his dream and its realization. See for example his letter to Is āf al-Nashās'hībī, the Palestinian writer, in Rasā'il, p.434. The letter is dated October 1st, 1933 and in it al-Rīḥāni describes the difficulties and obstacles but asserts the necessity of perseverence in strife. See also the emotional halo to his vision of Arab unity in his address to the same writer, ibid., p.417.

29. From a letter to the present writer in answer to a question concerning al-Rīḥāni's role in politics, dated November 25th, 1967.

30. Al-Rīḥāni, pp.45, 47-8, 89-90, 91, 125-6.

31. Namely: Mujāz Tārīkh al-Thaurah al-Firansiyyah, 1902, Al-Muḥālafah al-Thulāthiyya, 1903, and Al-Mikāri wa 'l-Kāhin, 1904; all three books were published in New York.

32. Published in 1903, the Rubā'iyyāt were a great success in America; see J. Jabr, op.cit., p.29. For an account of the honour he received after the publication of the book see M. 'Abbūd, Al-Rīḥāni, pp.9-10.

33. J. Jabr, op.cit., p.54.

34. See a short account of this association in ibid., pp.69 & 105. J. Jabr indicates however, that it was gossip which caused the estrangement between the two, but we also know that al-Rīḥānī disagreed basically with G.K. Gibrān and M. Nu'aima and some others in literary attitudes and blamed them for wasting their artistic power in spiritual philosophies when Arab conditions were in urgent need of their attention. See G. Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.237. See also p.236 for a quotation from a letter by A. al-Rīḥāni to Shukr Allah al-Jurr.

35. Ibid., p.225 n.

36. See his commentary on the poetry of Ahmad Rāmi (the Egyptian poet), written as early as 1922, where he says to the poet "You made us forget...what has bored us in /other/ collections of poetry of sighs...and cheap catastrophes..." Adab wa Fann, Beirut, 1957, p.17.

37. Ibid., p.82, addressing Yūsuf Ghuṣūb in 1928.

38. Ibid., pp.104-6.

39. Ibid., pp. 56 & 107.

40. Ibid., pp. 110-111.

41. Antum al-Shu'arā', pp.6-8, 15, 20-5, 52-68.

42. Rasā'il al-Rīḥāni, p.425 from a letter written in 1933.

43. Ibid.; Adab wa Fann, p.83 where he praises the balance in Y. Ghuṣūb's poetry.

44. Antum al-Shu'arā', pp.9 & 37; Al-Rīḥāniyyāt, I, 25-8.

45. Ibid.; Adab wa Fann, p.56; Antum al-Shu'arā', pp.85-8.

46. Ibid., pp.14-5; see also his chapter "Al-Alam al-Shakhṣi wa 'l-Qaumi", pp.37-51.

47. See his many articles in Al-Rīḥāniyyāt most famous of which is perhaps "Wādi 'l-Freikah", I, 5-20; for some more scattered examples see such essays as "Fi 'l-'Uzlah", II, 7-23 especially 9-10 and 21-3; "Bilādi", II, 44-6; "Ila 'l-Ṭabī'ah", IV, 31-2; see also his descriptions in Qalb Lubnān, Beirut, 1948, and other books of travel; on his love of nature see M. 'Abbūd, op.cit., pp.47-8; M.A. Mūsa, Amīn al-Rīḥāni, pp.39-44.

48. On these elements see F.L. Lucas, The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal, Cambridge University Press, 1948, pp.102-31.

49. Adab wa Fann, p.55.

50. See his essay "Al-Tajaddud al-Muzayyaf", Adab wa Fann, pp.69-74; see also his important article "Rūḥ al-Lughah" in Al-Rīḥāniyyāt, III, 60-76.

51. Ibid., pp.66-7.

52. M. 'Abbūd, Al-Rīḥāni, p.47, mentions that al-Rīḥāni could not perfect Arabic metres.

53. See his introduction to the collections of his prose poetry at the end of Al-Rīḥāniyyāt, II, 182, in which he says "This new kind of poetry is called Vers libre in French, or Free verse in English....and it is the last achievement in poetry in the West.... It is Walt Whitman who was the inventor of this method."

54. He was aware of the importance of reading the Bible, see J. Jabr, op.cit., p.24.

55. Ibid.

56. See for a single example his poem "Al-Thaurah", Al-Rīḥāniyyāt, II, 183-5.

57. On his prose poetry see J. Jabr, pp.52-3. Sāmi al-Kayyāli, however, discusses his prose poetry most superficially, confuses it with free verse movement which took place in the fifties, claims that the free verse poets "imitated al-Rīḥāni", and gives it not only the name of prose poetry, "Al-Shi'r al-Manthūr", but also of blank verse, "Al-Shi'r al-Mursal"; see Āmīn al-Rīḥāni, pp.67-8. It must be emphasised that, although al-Rīḥāni's attempts at prose poetry gave a newer freedom to poetry as a whole and broke the halo of traditional form, it had no direct relation to the free verse written later on in the fifties, which employes metre and rhyme more often than not. Al-Rīḥāni's attempt may be regarded as the forerunner of later attempts at prose poetry of the looser kind as well as at poetic prose.

58. Al-Rīḥāni, p.54.

59. Published in 1911 (Beirut) they appeared at the same time as al-Manfalūti's Al-Naẓarāt. Both books enjoyed an exceptionally great and rapid popularity. Al-Rīḥāni's style in these two volumes had not yet arrived at the strength and ease of his later style, and did not compare with al-Manfalūti's masterful writings. But the courage, novelty and charm of the work put it immediately in the foreground. See J. Jabr, op.cit., pp.52-3.

60. J. Jabr, Ibid., pp.53, 76, 97; G. Ṣaidah, op.cit., pp. 93, 239-240 etc.; M. 'Abbūd, Al-Rīḥāni, pp.7-8, 9-10, 23, 25-7, etc.

61. M.A. Mūsa, op.cit., p.126.

62. See I. 'Abbās, Fann al-Shi'r, p.51; see also a fuller discussion on the same subject by the same author in collaboration with M. Najm, Al-Shi'r al 'Arabi fi 'l Mahjar, the first chapter; M. 'Abbūd, Ru'ūs, p.294.

63. 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., p.35; A.al-Ashtar, Al-Nathr al-Mahjari, al-Madmūn wa Ṣūrat al-Ta'bīr, 2nd ed., Beirut, 1964, p.83; and see pp.37-8 for the influence of his personality.

64. I. 'Abbās and M.Y. Najm were right in referring the beginning of Romanticism to definite forces already operating in the 19th century. See op.cit., pp.19-35.

65. Mark Gibrān's words "I am a stranger in this world", in his poetic piece "Al-Shā'ir", Al-Badā'i' wa'l-Ṭarā'if, Cairo, 1923, p. 35.

66. R.A. Foakes, The Romantic Assertion, A Study in the Language of Nineteenth Century Poetry, London, 1958, p.13.

67. For a more detailed discussion on this see below, the fourth capter, the introductory section.

68. See K. Ḥāwi, op.cit., p.252.

69. A. Al-Ashtar, op.cit., pp. 61 & 85.

70. For example, Gibrān was influenced by Blake, the English Christian mystical poet.

71. Al-Maqdisi, Ittijāhāt, pp.76-83.

72. Ibid., p.82.

73. A. Al-Ashtar, op.cit., pp.62-5 discusses this point and points out that some have gone as far as to say that they were Christian missionaries preaching the gospel (quoting for this a Southern Mahjar writer, Taufīq Ḍu'ūn, see pp.64-5 & 65n).

74. See ibid., pp.36-7; K. Ḥāwi, op.cit., 192-3 & 207-9.

75. See K. Ḥāwi in his discussion of his prose poetical pieces, op.cit., pp.270-3; Ṣ. Labaki, Lubnān al-Shā'ir, p.99, etc.

76. This includes his novels and short stories as well as epigrams. Articles devoid of the particular aspects of his poetical style are few. For a single example see his article "Mustaqbal al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah", Al-Badā'i', pp.121-8, although even this is not devoid of the sudden flights of imagination typical to Gibrān, see p.127.

77. See op.cit., pp.272-3; see also p.104n, for his comment on Al-'Awāsif (1920) and pp.89 & 104 for his comment on Dam'ah wa Ibtisāmah, (1914).

78. See his chapter on Gibrān's "articles" (maqālat), in Funūn al-Nathr al-Mahjari, second edition, Beirut, 1965, pp.8-13. Under this category he mentions Dam'ah wa Ibtisāmah. and Al-'Awāsif etc. These include most of Gibrān's prose poetic pieces. Al-Ashtar in his Al-Nathr al-Mahjari, Al-Madmūn wa Ṣūrat al-Ta'bīr, p.197 refers to them as poetic prose: "nathr shi'ri", a much used term in modern Arabic.

79. See G. Ṣaidah, op.cit., pp.252-3; M. 'Abbūd, Ru'ūs, p.294, in which he includes Yemen and Hijaz as having authors who followed Gibrān's style; Philip Hitti, writing in 1929 insists on the pervasive influence of Gibrān on the Arab world and asserts that the new generation are trying to imitate him, "Maqām Gibrān fi 'l-Adab al-'Aṣri", Al-Muqtaṭaf, March, 1929, Vol.74, iii, 300; see also N. Karāmah, Gibrān Khalīl Gibrān wa Āthāruhu fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi, Zahlah, [1964?], p.114, etc.

80. M. 'Abbūd, Mujaddidūn, p.209; Ḥāwi, op.cit., pp.269-71 et passim.

81. Ibid., p.61.

82. 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., p.35.

83. See M. Nu'aimah, Gibrān Khalīl Gibrān, Beirut, 1943, p.185.

84. Op.cit., p.97.

85. Ibid., p.98.

86. Ibid., p.122.

87. See Muḥammad Taufīq Ḥusain, "Ta'līq 'alā Muḥāḍarat al-Ustādh Anīs al-Khouri al-Maqdisi", Al-Abḥāth, Beirut, June, 1952, V, ii, 209; see also T. Ṣāyigh, Adwā' Jadīdah 'alā Jubrān, Beirut, 1966, the chapter entitled "Miskīnah Sūriyyah", pp.112-33 and other places in the book which show Gibrān's concerned attitude towards his country and people.

88. M.H. Abrams, "English Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age", Romanticism Reconsidered, Columbia University Press, New York, 1963 p.43.

89. Ibid., Abrams calls it a 'peculiar injustice'.

90. Ibid., p.46.

91. See Northrop Frye, "The Drunken Boat", Romanticism Reconsidered, p.14.

92. For more on Gibrān's idealisation of Nature, see Ḥāwi, op.cit., pp.121-3, et passim.

93. See Ḥāwi, op.cit., p.229 et seq.

94. See N. Karāmah, op.cit., pp.114-26.

95. See Ṣaidah, op.cit., p.406.

96. Ibid., pp.60, 110 & 207.

97. Ḥāwi, op.cit., p.245.

98. On the influence of his "doctrine" on his language and style see ibid., p.277.

99. Ibid., pp.254-60.

100. Ibid., pp.250-3.

101. Ibid., pp.260-7.

102. Lucas, The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal, p.50.

103. See, for example, "Māta Ahli", and "Yā Banī Ummī", Gibrān Ḥaiyan wa Maitan ed. Ḥabīb Mas'ūd, second edition, Beirut, 1966, pp. 43-7 and 163-6 respectively.

104. For more details on his parallelisms see Ḥāwi, op.cit., pp.254-8.

105. Al-Badā'i', p.128.

106. Ibid., p.126.

107. Gibrān Ḥaiyan, p.132.

108. 'Abbūd, Judud wa Qudamā', pp. 87-8 & 101 for 'Abbūd's arguments with such writers as al-'Aqqād and Khalīl Taqiyy al-Dīn in their criticism of Gibrān's language and grammar.

109. For an enumeration of some of his mistakes see al-Ashtar, Al-Nathr al-Mahjari, al-Maḍmūn wa Ṣūrat al-Ta'bīr, p.203n.

110. Lucas, op.cit., p.47.

111. O.Barfield, Poetic Diction, London, 1928, p.137.

112. Op.cit., p.260.

113. Ibid., p.262.

114. Ibid., p.260. See R.A. Foakes, The Romantic Assertion, pp.49-50.

115. Op.cit., p.48.

116. On these see ibid., p.24.

117. See Labaki, Lubnān al-Shā'ir, pp.116-7.

118. See 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., p.42.

119. See his poem "Al-Baḥr" in Al-Badā'i', pp.213-4. On his use of the theme of the sea as a symbol see 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., p.74; Ḥāwi, op.cit., pp.266 and 267.

120. See his prose poem "Ayyuha 'l-Lailu", Al-Badā'i', pp.55-7; on his love of writing about the night see Nu'aimah, Al-Ghirbāl, p.229.

121. Ḥāwi, op.cit., p.262.

122. Mujaddidūn, p.213.

123. Ibid., pp.72 and 213.

124. Shi'r 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā, Cairo, 1965, p.12 n.

125. In his two books on Arabic prose in al-Mahjar, Al-Maḍmūn wa Ṣūrat al-Ta'bīr and Funūn al-Nathr al-Mahjari.

126. See the preface by Mandūr to al-Ashtar's first edition of Al-Nathr al-Mahjari, Kuttāb al-Rābitah al-Qalamiyyah, Vol.I, Al-Maḍmūn wa Ṣūrat al-Ta'bīr, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1961, as well as the author's introduction to it. He modified this introduction and left out the preface in his second revised edition.

127. Op.cit., p.273.
128. Al-Badā'i' , pp.75-80.
129. Ibid., pp.35-6.
130. Ibid., pp.98-100.
131. Op.cit., p.263.
132. Ibid., p.272.
133. Ibid.
134. Shi'r 'Ali Mahmūd Tāhā, p.11.
135. Gibrān Ḥaiyan, p.353-7.
136. Al-Fusūl, pp. 48 & 49.
137. Op.cit., p.110; see also 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., p.47.
138. Ibid., pp.43-8.
139. See Northrop Frye, op.cit., p.13.
140. Some poems differ from this and enjoy great lyricism. See his lovely poem "Ughniyyat al-Lail", Gibrān Ḥaiyan, p.219.
141. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, op.cit., p.12, comments on Gibrān's dogmatic approach.
142. Dam'ah wa Ibtisāmah, Beirut, 1962, p.121.
143. Ibid.; see also "Al-Shā'ir", Al-Badā'i', pp.35-6.
144. Dam'ah, loc.cit.
145. Al-Badā'i', p.36.
146. Ibid., p.127. This essay includes many ideas on conventionalism.
147. Ḥāwi, op.cit., p.258, mentions Gibrān's excessive use of adjectives.
148. Words and Poetry, second impression, London, 1928, p.66.
149. See Sab'ūn, I, which deals mainly and in detail with his childhood, early youth and education.
150. Sab'ūn, II, 20-30.
151. Al-Funūn appeared first in April, 1913, see ibid., p.28.
152. Ibid., p.29.
153. Ibid., p.30; he says in note that he included part of this article in his essay "Al-Ḥubāḥib" published in Al-Ghirbāl.
154. See Sab'ūn, II, 15.
155. Ibid., p.32.
156. Ibid., p.33.
157. Ibid., p.32.
158. Ibid., p. 34 & 35.
159. Ibid., pp.57-8.
160. Ibid., p.142.
161. See his Chapter "Al-'Ajīn Yakhtamir", ibid., pp.151-7.
162. Ibid., p.155.
163. Ibid., pp.155-6.

164. See Al-Ghirbāl, pp.221, 223-5, et passim.

165. Editor of a famous volume entitled Balāghat al-'Arab fi 'l-Qarn al-'Ishrīn, published in Cairo in 1924, in which he collected different works by members of "Al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah".

166. Sab'ūn, II, 194, 200.

167. There is a good possibility, however, that Nu'aimah's article on Shauqi entitled "Al-Durrah al-Shauqiyyah", Al-Ghirbāl, pp.145-154 was written after 1922 under the influence of Al-Dīwān.

168. Sab'ūn, II, 198; See also Nu'aimah, Al-Ma'rifah, Damascus, Feb. 1964, p.107; see also Mandūr, Al-Naqd wa 'l-Nuqqād al-Mu'āṣirūn, pp.30-1.

169. Ibid., p.31.

170. Al-Ghirbāl, p.206.

171. See Jamā'at Apollo, pp.121, 126.

172. See Sab'ūn, II, 33, where N. 'Arīḍah tells Nu'aimah in a letter that al-Manfalūṭi has written asking them to write a comment on his Al-Nazarāt. 'Arīḍah adds, "Write and vindicate me from these writers!"

173. Ibid., pp.200-1.

174. Ibid., p.201.

175. Ibid., pp.172-201; see also Ṣaidaḥ, pp.88-9, 110-112, et passim.

176. Sab'ūn, I, 122.

177. Ibid., II, 178; Nu'aimah admitted not having been in real touch with /Classical/ Arabic literature while in al-Mahjar; see his interview with 'Abd al-Karīm al-Ashtar, Al-Ma'rifah magazine, Damascus, February, 1964, p.109.

178. See Al-Ghirbāl, pp.48-9.

179. Ibid., pp.42-9.

180. Even long before, al-Shābbi, the Tunisian poet, as early as the twenties, wrote a little book entitled Al-Khayāl al-Shi'ri 'Ind al-'Arab, in which he attacked the whole Classical poetic output. This book was originally given as a lecture delivered in Tunis in 1929. See below the section on al-Shābbi in the chapter on Romanticism, pp.582-5.

181. See his chapter "Naqīq al-Ḍafādi'", Al-Ghirbāl, pp.91-107.

182. Ibid., pp.98-9; see also Durūb, third edition, Beirut, 1963, pp.56-7.

183. For a history of these see Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir, Abāṭīl wa Asmār, Cairo, 1385 A.H.

184. Al-Ghirbāl, p.97.

185. Ibid., p.94.

186. Ibid., p.95.

187. Ibid., p.105.

188. Ibid.

189. Ibid., p.106.

190. Ibid., p.11.

191. Ibid., p.105; see also p.78 where he says that poetry is both form and content.

192. Ibid.

193. Al-Naqd wa 'l-Nuqqād al-Mu'āsirūn, pp.11-2.

194. Al-Ghirbāl, p.106.

195. Ibid.

196. Mīkhā'īl Nu'aimah, al-Adīb al-Ṣūfi, Beirut, 1964, p.39.

197. See M.Z. Salām, Tārīkh al-Naqd al-'Arabi ilā 'l-Qarn al-Rābi' al-Hijri, Cairo, 1964 for a resume of the ideas of Classical critics.

198. Nu'aimah showed awareness, later on, of this necessity. See 'Abd al-Karīm al-Ashtar, Al-Nathr al-Mahjari, al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah, first edition, Cairo, 1961, pp.172-3 and 223 where he is quoted to have said something to the effect that the rebels had to go with their rebellion very far so that "the ebb would not drag them back."

199. See Al-Ghirbāl, pp.119-22.

200. See his chapter, "Al-Ziḥāfat wa 'l-'Ilal", Al-Ghirbāl, pp.108-126, especially pp.109-10.

201. See E. Wilson, The Triple Thinkers, pp.22-3 of his chapter "Is Verse a Dying Technique?"

202. Al-Ghirbāl, p.119.

203. See al-Ashtar, Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah, p.198.

204. See Al-Ghirbāl, pp.108-11.

205. See his description of his style, ibid., pp.222 & 223.

206. Ibid., p.12.

207. Ibid., p.117.

208. Ibid., p.86; he calls rhyme 'an iron chain'.

209. Ibid., p.113.

210. Ibid., p.16.

211. Ibid., pp.14-16.

212. Ibid., p.17.

213. Al-Naqd wa 'l-Nuqqād, p.33.

214. Al-Ghirbāl, p.18.

215. Ibid., p.19.

216. Ibid., p.20.

217. Ibid., pp.20-1.

218. Ibid., pp.74-5.

219. See a summary of a lecture by Y. al-Khāl, "Mustaqbal al-Shi'r al-'Arabi fī Lubnān", Shi'r qaurterly, No.2, Spring, 1957, p.99.

220. Al-Ghirbāl, pp.26-7.

221. Ibid., his essay "Al-Maqāyīs al-Adabiyyah", pp.67-76.

222. Ibid., p.72; for more on his conception of the need of men to express themselves, see Durūb, pp.36-45, from his famous essay "Māhiyyatu al-Adab wa Muhimmatuhu".

223. Al-Ghirbāl, p.73.

224. Ibid., p.85.

225. Many years later his attitude towards this point was to become even more confirmed. He rejected the idea that literature was a picture of the age insisting that it belonged to all time. A man of letters, in his opinion, must feel his roots in all eternity. See Al-Authān, second edition, Beirut, 1958, pp. 46 & 47. A more precise idea is his saying that literature must be purified from the baseness of politics and nationalism; p.47; see also Durūb, pp. 49, 51 & 52 for his insistence that literature should concentrate on nourishing the virtues of the human heart.

226. Al-Ghirbāl, pp.78-9.

227. Ibid., p.81.

228. Ibid., p.103.

229. Ibid., p.86.

230. Ibid., p.87.

231. Ibid., p.84.

232. Ibid., p.220.

233. Ibid., p.225.

234. Ibid., p.125.

235. Ibid., p.223.

236. Ibid., p.65.

237. Ibid., p.66.

238. Ibid., pp.145-54, especially pp. 149-51. See also Mandūr, Al-Naqd wa 'l Nuqqād, p.48 where he argues Nu'aimah's harsh comment on Shauqi's poem.

239. For a summary of his ideas see al-Ashtar, Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah, pp.199-209; and for an assessment and interpretation of them see ibid., pp.209-26; M. Mandūr, Al-Naqd wa 'l-Nuqqad al-Mu'āṣirūn, pp.25-51; Nadīm Naimy, Mikhail Naimy, American University of Beirut, Beirut, 1967, pp. 125-40; M.Y. Najm, "Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah", Al-Adab al-'Arabi fi Āthār al-Dārisīn, pp.333-45; Malḥas, op.cit; etc.

240. Published first in Al-Abḥāth magazine, June, 1954, it was included in Durūb. The quotations are from Durūb.

241. See ibid., p.52.

242. Ibid., pp.48-9.

243. Ibid., p.50.

244. Ibid., p.51.

245. Ibid., p.56.

246. Ibid.

247. Ibid.

248. See pp.201-3 of Sab'ūn, II.

249. 1956, in Damascus.

250. For a copy of this lecture, see Al-Ādāb, October, 1956, pp.5-6 and 85-7.

251. Ibid., pp. 7 and 87.

252. Ibid., pp. 8 and 5.

253. Ibid., p.87; see also ibid., pp.8-11, for the answer of R. Khouri to Nu'aimah's lecture.

254. George Santayana, Interpretations of Poetry and Religion, New York, 1924, p.14.

255. Ibid.

256. Ibid., p.15.

257. Ibid., p.17.

258. See Santayana's description, Ibid., p.18.

259. See al-Ashtar, Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah, pp.225-6; see also p.226 for a quotation from Nu'aimah in which he says "I have become spiritually.. inclined...and have started to see in criticism a kind of intrusion, 'tatafful'."

260. Even in a world living under more normal conditions, Santayana cannot forgive the renunciation of the mystic; op.cit., p.21.

261. Mīkhā'īl Nu'aimah, al-Adīb al-Ṣūfi..

262. See Ilyās Abū Shabakah: Rawābiṭ al-Fikr wa 'l-Rūḥ, pp.158-60 for his attack on the mystical spiritualism of al-Mahjar poets which he describes as a plight.

263. Sab'ūn, II, 72.

264. Such as his poems : "Man Anti Yā Nafsi", Hams al-Jufūn, Beirut, 1943, pp.18-21 "Ibtihālāt", ibid., pp.32-7; "Ṣadā 'l-Ajrās", ibid., pp.38-42; "Unshūdah", ibid., pp.58-60.

265. Such as his poems "Al-Nahr al-Mutajammid", ibid., pp.10-4; "Min Sifr al-Zamān", ibid., pp.26-7; "Yā Rafīqi", ibid., pp.68-72; "Fattish li Qalbika", ibid., pp.84-5; "Ilā M.B.D.", ibid., pp.92-4 etc.

266. For an account of the conditions in which he wrote several of his poems see Sab'ūn, II, 72-3; 163-7; 253-5. Had this book been out when 'Abbās and Najm wrote their book on al-Mahjar poetry, they would have benefited greatly and found adequate answer to their speculations as to the incentives behind Nu'aimah's poetry, see op.cit., p.191.

267. See for example his poem "Al-Ān", Hams al-Jufūn, pp.95-6; see also 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., pp.188-9.

268. Term adopted from K.E. Morgan, Christian Themes in Contemporary Poets, London, 1965, p.16.

269. Fi 'l-Mīzān al-Jadīd, third edition, Cairo, n.d., pp.69-75.

270. Op.cit., p.185.

271. To show the natural habit of writing similar folk-songs in Lebanese vernacular one may quote an extract given to the present writer by a Lebanese poetess, Jamāl Sleem Nuwaihiḍ. The Sleem family, like many others in Lebanon, do sometimes write to each other in Lebanese zajal; in the following extract "Jibā'" is the village of the Sleem family:

وحياتـــك يا جبـــاع الشـوف	غير جمالك ما منشـــــوف
الله يحيي الـــــــزلا زل	شو عملـــت صنا معـــروف
الله يحيي الـــــــزلا زل	عمّرتلـك منـــــــــا زل
بطّالك اصبح عامـــــــل	وظلاحك اصبـــح معـــروف

This is spontaneous and artless and is probably an adequate example of the natural simplicity of this popular form.

272. ʿAbbās and Najm, op.cit., p.178 contradicted themselves when they described his insistence on saying everything he felt as unpoetic then said that his poetry is characterized by its lack of dilution "qillat al-ḥashw".

273. Ibid., p.184.

274. See for example A.K. al-Maqdisi, Taṭawwur al-Asālīb al-Naṯhriyyah fi 'l-Adab al-ʿArabi, Beirut, 1935, pp.133-216, especially pp.138, 161, 174-86, particularly p.184.

275. Hams al-Jufūn, p.32.

276. See ʿAbbās and Najm, op.cit., p.178.

277. Hams al-Jufūn, p.36.

278. Ibid., p.90.

279. See p.57 his poem "Al-Khair wa 'l-Sharr"; p.86, his poem "Al-ʿIrāk"; pp.87-8, his poem "Yā Baḥr". The whole poems should be consulted for examples of this.

280. Ibid., p.59.

281. Nuʿaimah, Sabʿūn, II, 170.

282. See Nuʿaimah's introduction to the society's constitution, ibid., p.171.

283. Al-Nāʿūri, Adab al-Mahjar, p.379.

284. Aside from his introduction to "Al-Rābiṭah's" constitution, see also his introduction to the collection of "Al-Rabiṭah", Majmūʿat al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah, published in 1921 in New York.

285. See for example the first issue of Shiʿr, Winter, 1957, a poem by Badawi al-Jabal, pp.7-14; also the fourth issue, Autumn, 1957, a poem by George Ṣaidaḥ, pp.8-13 etc.

286. See Nuʿaimah, Sabʿūn, II, 182; N. Sarrāj, Shuʿarāʾ al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah, pp.86-8; al-Nāʿūri, loc.cit.

287. On its influence, see Sarrāj, op.cit., pp.95-7.

288. Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.309.

289. On Al-Funūn, see Sarrāj, op.cit., pp.80-4; al-Nāʿūri, op.cit., pp.405-6; and see Nuʿaimah's many reminiscences in Sabʿūn, II, 23-30, 31-4, 51-60, 141-2.

290. Ibid., p.142.

291. Ibid., p.303.

292. Ibid., pp.142 & 170. On Al-Sāʾih's history see Sarrāj, op.cit., pp.86-8; Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., pp.309-11; al-Nāʿūri, op.cit., pp.423, 426-7.

293. Sabʿūn, II, 217-23, & 303.

294. See N. Ṣafwat, Īlyā Abū Māḍi, wa 'l-Ḥarakah al-Adabiyyah fi 'l-Mahjar, Baghdad, 1945, p.29, on his popularity in Iraq. It is relevant to say that Al-Jadāwil was published by two publishing firms in al-Najaf, the citadel of linguistic traditionalism in Iraq, in 1927; see also Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.64. His publishers, Dār l-ʿIlm li 'l-Malāyīn, confirm the fact that he is one of the most popular, if not the most popular, poets of the Arab world in contemporary times; from an interview with the publishers.

295. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, "Malāmiḥ ʿĀmmah fī Shiʿr Īlyā Abū Māḍi", Shiʿr quarterly, No.6, Spring 1958, p.98.

296. ʿAbbās and Najm, op.cit., p.145.

297. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, loc.cit.

298. Ṣafwat, op.cit., p.57.

299. Nuʿaimah, Sabʿūn, II, 152.

300. Gibb seems to overlook this completely; see "Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature, I, The Nineteenth Century", B.S.O.A.S., 1926-1928, IV, iv, 760. For him, the "Syrian American School", meaning that of North Mahjar, had a complete and irrevokable break with the past. See the comment of Nuʿaimah on Gibb's idea in his interview with ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Ashtar in 1958, published in Al-Maʿrifah, Damascus, February 1964, II, No.24, 108.

301. Perhaps this can explain why Nuʿaimah never liked his poetry. "I do not find it of any worth"; "Ana lā arāhu shai'an". Ibid.,p.110.

302. Loc.cit.

303. Most sources mention this year. Nāʿūri,however, says that it was in 1912 that he left for America; op.cit., p.377.

304. Ṣaidaḥ, op.cit., p.276; Nuʿaimah, loc.cit., etc.

305. Ibid., p.153.

306. Ibid., p.151.

307. See Z. Mīrza, Ilyā Abū Māḍi; Shāʿir al-Mahjar al-Akbar which is a study of the poet as well as a collection of his four diwans (the first two of which are very rare) and some other poems published after the appearance of Al-Khamā'il, his fourth volume; second edition, Damascus, 1963, pp.624-6.

308. Ibid., pp.307-10.

309. Ibid., pp.583-6.

310. Sabʿūn, II, 153-4.

311. Ibid.

312. See a copy of this introduction, Mīrza, op.cit., pp.94-5; N.B. the mistake Mīrza has on p.94, footnote.

313. Ibid., p.95.

314. See as examples of these his poems "Bint Sūriyyah", ibid., pp.587-93; "Suqūṭ Araḍrūm", pp.553-8; "Bilādi", pp.683-6.

315. For a single example see his poem "Lam Ajid Aḥadā".

316. See Sarrāj, op.cit., p.329. Only an exerpt from this introduction is quoted here. It is remarkable that this introduction by a famous early critic was omitted from the fourth edition as well as from the huge collection in Mīrza's anthology, which included the short introduction by Gibrān. Sarrāj quotes from the first New York edition of 1927.

317. Al-Khamā'il, fifth edition, Beirut, 1963, pp.87-91.

318. See for a single example,Al-Jadāwil, fourth edition, Beirut, 1963, pp.99-102.

319. See Tibr wa Turāb, first edition, Beirut, 1960, pp.141-227.

320. ʿAbbās and Najm, op.cit., pp.78 and 79.

321. See his poem, "Ta'ālī", Al-Jadāwil, pp.30-3; see also 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., pp.80-1 where they analyse the theme of love in his poetry.

322. Ibid., p.81; however, they refer this to Abū Māḍi's shift to a rational phase in his poetic career.

323. From his poem "Fi 'l-Qafr", Al-Jadāwil, p.51.

324. 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., p.82 and 85-6.

325. Al-Jadāwil, p.52.

326. See 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., pp.50-3, in which they describe them as "suffocated dualisms."

327. Mīrza, op.cit., pp.670-3.

328. See also 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., pp.60-2.

329. See ibid., pp.134 et seq.

330. Ibid., p.137.

331. Al-Jadāwil, pp.63-6.

332. Mīrza, op.cit., pp.306-10.

333. See 'Abbās and Najm, loc.cit.

334. pp.10-15.

335. On this see 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., pp.146-150.

336. Al-Jadāwil, pp.16-20.

337. Ibid., p.20.

338. Ibid.

339. Ibid., pp.37-8.

340. Ibid., pp.34-6.

341. Ibid., pp.30-3.

342. Ibid., pp.56-62.

343. Ibid., pp.39-45.

344. See for example his poems "Al-Faqīr" and "Al-Qaṣr wa 'l-Kūkh" (this last one from his famous "Al-Talāsim"), ibid., pp.211-6 and 158-61 respectively; see also Al-Khamā'il for his poem "Kulū wa 'shrabū", pp.126-8; see also Tibr wa Turāb, for his poem "Fī Qalbika 'l-Lāh.", pp.103-5; especially p.104.

345. 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., pp.151-2.

346. Al-Jadāwil, pp.81-3.

347. Ibid., p.83.

348. Ibid., pp.211-6.

349. Ibid., p.214.

350. Ibid., pp.139-77.

351. 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., p.171.

352. See ibid., pp.168-71 for more detailed criticism of this poem.

353. Dirāsāt fī Adabinā 'l-Ḥadīth, Cairo, 1961, p.164.

354. See for example his quatrains on the 'hermits' in which he, although pretending not to know the answer gives his own opinion by condemning hermit life, pp.149-52.

355. See for example his poems: "Al-Tīnah al-Ḥamqā'", Al-Jadāwil, pp.46-7; "Al-Masā'", ibid., pp.56-62; "Hiya", ibid., pp.118-121; "Al-Ashbāḥ al-Thalāthah", ibid., pp.105-113; "Umniyyatu 'l-Ālihah", Al-Khamā'il, pp.30-5.

356. Al-Jadāwil, pp.203-6.

357. Ibid., 206.

358. Al-Khamā'il, p.42, from a poem entitled "Mummies", ibid., pp.42-6. The whole poem shows unbelievable cruelty towards old women and a great coarseness of spirit.

359. Al-Khamā'il, p.204.

360. Tibr wa Turāb, p.44.

361. Mīrza, p.626, his poem "Falsafatu 'l-Ḥayāt".

362. Al-Jadāwil, pp.71-2.

363. See for example his poems "Florida", Al-Khamā'il, pp.200-5; "Al-Ṣaif", Tibr wa Turāb, pp.31-4; "Aylūl al-Shā'ir", ibid., pp.71-3; "Los Angeles", ibid., pp.78-83.

364. 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., p.145.

365. See 'Abbās and Najm, Ibid., p.151.

366. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, Shi'r, 6, Spring, 1958, p.101.

367. 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., pp.151, 152, 154, 175.

368. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, in her critical comment on Abū Māḍi, Shi'r, No. 6, Spring, 1958, pp.98-102, attacks 'wisdom' in poetry. It is, she says, alien to poetry because it is the result of experience. Poetry should be, not the sum total of experience, but the description of it in its emotional level (pp.99-100). Two points are relevant here. The first thing is that even Abū Māḍi's poetry in Al-Jadāwil, which N. al-Malā'ikah admires very much, is not often devoid of the epigramatic ending. The second is that it is not the philosophical basis in a poem (which can be well related to the evolvement of experience) that can spoil the 'poetic' quality of a poem, but the way it is conveyed. In al-Jadāwil, when Abū Māḍi resorted to oblique methods to convey his ideas, the dogmatic conclusion at the end of the poems (poems like "Al-Sajīnah", p.20; "Al-Samā'", p.26; "Al-'Ir al-Mutanakkir", p.29; "Rīḥ al-Shamāl", p.36; "Al-Tīnah al-Ḥamqā'", p.47; "Al-Zamān", p.80; "'Īd al-Nuhā," p.133; "Maut al-'Abqari", p.137; etc. (pages referring to the ends of the poems) was accepted because it came as a logical conclusion to a growing idea developed in the poem. What N. al-Malā'ikah condemns really is the directly didactic attitude of his less successful poems.

369. See Nāzik al-Malā'ikah's intelligent and very interesting discussion on this point, ibid., p.101.

370. Al-Jadāwil, p.46.

371. Ibid., p.37.

372. Ibid., p.21.

373. Ibid., p.29.

374. See 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., p.154.

375. He was even loath to give information about himself to his biographers. See I. al-Nā'ūri, op.cit., pp.376-7.

376. Hadīth al-Arbi'ā', III, 220-7.

377. Ibid., pp.220-2.

378. Ibid., pp.226-7.

379. Ibid., p.224.

380. Ibid., p.223.

381. Dirāsāt fī Adabina 'l-Hadīth, pp.155-162.

382. Ibid., pp.158-9, and p.160.

383. Ibid., p.157.

384. Ibid., also pp.161-2.

385. Ibid., p.162.

386. Poems like "'Alā 'l-Ṭarīq", Mukhtārāt min Nasīb 'Arīdah, Manāhil al-Adab al-'Arabi, Beirut, [1953,] pp.7-9; "Munājat", pp.13-17; "Yā Nafs", pp.18-25; "Siyyān", p.26; his "Rubā'iyyat", pp.53-59; see Mandūr's essay on him in Mizān, pp.75-85, in which he analyses his poem "Yā Nafs".

387. Mukhtārāt, p.15.

388. Ibid., p.34.

389. Ibid., p.28 from his poem "Yā Akhi", pp.27-8.

390. See what 'Abbūd comments on this verse, Mujaddidūn, p.206.

391. See what 'Abbās and Najm say about this point, op.cit., pp.210-1.

392. See his long poem "'Alā Ṭarīq Iram", Al-Arwāh al-Hā'irah, New York, 1946, pp.178-97 which is a search for spiritual illumination; see also Nu'aimah, Sab'ūn, II, 155.

393. Like his poems "Nafsu 'l-Shujā'", Mukhtārāt, pp.62-5; "Ilā Filasṭīn" ibid., pp.113-7; and above all his famous poem "Al-Nihāyah", ibid., pp.10-2. However, although this poem is artistically good, its fame stems from its form which was regarded as a genuine attempt to liberate the form of the Arabic qasīdah. For a discussion of the form of this poem, see below pp.773-4. It is interesting to see that the poem appeared in Al-Arwāh al-Hā'irah arranged in the style of the modern free verse, see pp. 65-7. On the national trend of his poetry see Muhādarāt al-Mausim al-Thaqāfi, Ministry of Culture and National Guidance, Damascus, 1963, Vol. V, 293-5, a lecture by Farīd Jiha entitled "Al-'Urūbah wa Shu'arā'uha fi 'l-Mahjar"; see also Al-Ma'rifah, Damascus, August, 1963, an essay by Ḥārith Ṭāhā 'l-Rāwi entitled "Nasīb 'Arīḍah fī Shi'rihi 'l-Qaumi", pp.56-62.

394. See 'Abbās and Najm, op.cit., pp.210-12. For more on 'Arīḍah see N.J. Sarrāj, Nasīb 'Arīdah and his Contribution to Modern Arabic Literature, a Ph.D. thesis, unpublished, University of Cambridge, 1963.

CHAPTER THREE: THE BREAK THROUGH BEGINS

SECTION 1 : EGYPT

Perhaps a distinctive and at the same time peculiar quality of the Mahjar poets in North America was that they did not reflect a special social and political environment. Neither were they really involved in the American environment around them, nor did they actually participate in the developments that were taking place in their home countries in the political, social, cultural and psychological spheres. This is one of the reasons for the preponderance of their particular subjects; namely, Nature and man in Nature and in the universe, often stripped of his immediate identity in time and place. This is a unique situation in the history of any poetry and should always be treated as such.

In the Arab world, however, the story of poetry takes on a different shape, recording all aspects of the national development, with Egypt taking the lead in the field of poetic ideas. The literary renaissance in Egypt, nourished greatly by the Syro-Lebanese creative talent, was now taken into Egyptian hands. From the second decade on, the limelight in Egypt would be focussed mainly on Egyptian talent, often to the neglect of other talents in the rest of the Arab world. The Arab world, however, would hold on to its former attitude of inter-Arab literary exchange. The steady growth of literary activity, begun and developed in the nineteenth century, would now begin to bear fruit through magazines, newspapers, publishing firms and the University, together with the presence of an ever increasing number of educated men. However, aside from the contribution of Shauqi, supported by that of Ḥāfiẓ and other Egyptian neo-Classical poets, the rising poet-aspirants of the second decade of the century (such as ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād, Aḥmad Zaki Abū Shādi,

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Shukri and Ibrāhīm al-Māzini) were not able to take the lead in poetry in the Arab world, and despite their progressive attitude, they could not furnish the literary field with poetic creativity of permanent value or even of real immediate influence. The great bulk of material written on the Egyptian poets of the first three decades in contemporary Egypt, can be very confounding to the student of Arabic poetry because it often lays the stress on a poetic contribution which had only a minor effect on the main stream of Arabic poetry and must therefore be re-examined and re-judged. For neither al-ʿAqqād, nor al-Māzini, were good poets in any sense of the term. Even Shukri never had much of a true appeal in the Arab world,[1] despite the fact that he was **the foremost avant-garde** poet of his generation. The generation of poets in the Arab world who were emerging in the twenties and thirties grew without benefiting much from the actual poetic experiments of the progressives in Egypt, for their poetry does not show signs of having been influenced by them. It was, however, through the medium of prose that the Egyptian talent served the development of Arabic poetry in the first three decades of the century. This manifested itself in two spheres. The first was the prose writings of al-Manfalūṭi and some other contemporary writers which helped to set the trend of Romantic literature in the Arab world, as has been already mentioned. The second was the critical writings on the poetic art by the poets themselves as well as by some other critics.

(i) Al-Manfalūṭi's Romanticism

Al-Manfalūṭi (1872-1924) had a far greater influence than that for which writers on the subject have given him credit. His work, however, must not be judged in the light of permanent artistic achievement, for he did not excel in any of the literary genres which he attempted. His translations, as such, fail drastically. They were merely a free interpretation of the theme and mood of the translated work. The stories which he himself wrote cannot stand the test of good story writing. They

are merely a faded imitation of the stories he translated. His articles on social and moral issues are now out-dated and can only appear to the modern reader as the somewhat naive writings of an old-fashioned Azhari with a limited culture. Yet he is one of the few early twentieth century writers who won great popularity in their life-time,[2] and whose works are still robustly alive in the Arab world.[3] Writers on the subject seem to think that his popularity was due to his fluent, easy, lucid, vivacious and highly emotional style.[4] Yet style alone cannot be the only reason why al-Manfalūṭi was able to win such immediate popularity and to keep it with the successive generations. His great talent showed itself first of all in his instinctive realisation of what was needed in literature at that time, namely, reading material of a kind that could satisfy the emotional promptings of a society newly awakened to its own handicaps and disappointments, forging a link with the West and,at the same time, keeping a firm grasp on the best in the old traditions both in style and ideas. This came easily to him because he did not know any Western language.[5] He could therefore limit his fascination with Western literature to that sort of indirect translation through intermediaries which enabled him to keep to a purely Arabic style.[6] The Western literature with which he came into contact was decidedly Romantic[7] and he indulged himself in translating such famous plays as Cyrano de Bergerac[8] by Edmond Rostand and Pour la Couronne[9] by Francois Coppee, and such novels as Sous les Tilleuls[10] by Alphonse Karr and Paul et Verginee[11] by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. Aside from these long works he translated some short stories which he collected together with some of his own in his famous book Al-ʿAbarāt. These translations were perhaps some of the greatest literary events that took place in the first quarter of the century. The Romantic yearnings in them, and in all al-Manfalūṭi's creative writings coincided with the Romantic yearnings which began to make themselves felt in society during the second decade and which increased in intensity in the third and fourth

decades as awareness of the stilted social and political conditions steadily increased.[12] Al-Manfalūṭi early set the mood in Arabic literature for the Romantic trend,[13] helped to a great extent by a personal situation which tinged his life with sorrow, namely the simultaneous death of two of his children followed by the sickness and death of his beloved wife,[14] as well as by a natural sensitivity to all who seemed oppressed, deprived and unhappy in life.[15] But the main point to be stressed here in al-Manfalūṭi's achievement is that he had caught the mood of the era and was the first author to give it a true and full expression. As al-Ma'addāwi asserts, the mood of the age was given to melancholy which manifested itself in the tendency of the younger generation of educated men towards introversion and wistfulness, coupled with a social reserve and timidity. These traits were imposed upon them by the special character of the times, for they were times which furnished them with a clearly different picture of life in a happier, more affluent and much more progressive society. There and then, the first realisation of their shackled existence dawned upon the youth of the Arab world. They felt deeply and vaguely resented the lack of emotional and intellectual freedom they had as they lay in the grip of the social and political taboos. This state of mind is at great variance with the self-assured attitude of Shauqi's generation, an attitude of acceptance that took the existing mode of life for granted. With that former generation there was no question of social contradictions, and everything socially different was foreign and belonged to different peoples and places. Their legacy was basically different and had to remain so, guarded jealously by reformers who would accept changes only if they coincided with basic Islamic or Arabic principles. The younger generation, however, was no longer so self-assured. Neither from the communal, nor from the individual point of view, was this generation a happy one. With the older generation all encroachment on its freedom was regarded as an outside invasion, and was tinged mainly with a political colour; but with

the younger generation the issue of freedom was more complicated, for it involved also the shackled state of the individual in his own personal existence. By the beginning of the second decade the younger generation of educated men was only too conscious of the gap which existed between their personal aspirations and longings for a freer emotional and intellectual existence and the social conditions with which they had to comply, and with this knowledge they sank back into their own despondency.[16] It was in the prose writings of al-Manfalūṭi and some others that they found an echo and an expression of their inner state of mind.[17] Poetry had long catered for the old social and political order.[18] It was the voice of the community, not of the individual, a record of 'events', an instigator to patriotic deeds and an outward expression of communal feelings and experiences. Even now, in the new era, it had remained a 'public' expression, sought for the stock communal emotions it was able to release. Al-Ma'ddāwi draws a line between the different roles played by poetry and prose in those early decades.[19] He says "it was asked of poetry during that period that it should be the true expression of the social and political conditions, and the vehicle of general national feelings...."[20] It is clear to him that poetry was not able to be the voice of the inner self, of the individual's experiences and longings,[21] yet he gives no reason for the fact. However, the reason is not out of reach. Shauqi had brought the neo-Classical poetry to a very high standard, had given the Arabic poem what seemed to the audience to be the ideal pattern for poetry at that time. Arabic poetry, even at the present time, still suffers from the deeply rooted impression the modern Arabs acquired about its role and general qualities, and the Classical poem of the type Shauqi wrote is still very popular. It adhered to the two hemistich form and the monorhyme. It catered in general to a large audience and was often meant to be delivered from the platform. Moreover, it dealt with matters of general public interest and invariably released

stock communal emotions. Particularly during the early decades of the century the audience of poetry could not have accepted a drastic change in the pattern of the Arabic poem. Any important change had either to be brought about gradually, or had to be implemented by a really great poet able to impose his own personality on an art that had become distinctly standardised. Among the poets who rose to fame in the second decade none seemed to be a truly good poet. Moreover, one doubts whether, even from an artistic point of view, Arabic poetry could have undergone, in the second decade, the change from Classicism to Romanticism. As has been mentioned above, it is more difficult for the art of poetry to undergo change than for the art of prose.

Arabic prose, on the other hand, had always been a vehicle of experimentation ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century. When al-Manfalūṭi started writing, he did not meet with any of the difficulties, artistic or psychological, on the part of the audience, with which poetry was prone to meet. His immediate popularity is a proof, not only of his stylistic ability, but also of his instinctively successful choice as regards the topic and mood of what he wrote.[22] It is strange, however, that al-Manfalūṭi, although adhering intellectually to the old Arab-Islamic norms, gave expression in his melancholic writings to the mood of bewilderment and restless yearning of the younger generation of that period. In him, there is little of the serene self-assured acceptance that was so prevalent in authors like Shauqi,[23] and he soon sank into a kind of sentimental pessimism.[24] The discrepancy between al-Manfalūṭi's basic cultural norms and his instinctive reflection of the mood of the younger generation can only be explained by the fact that the artist in him was at variance with the Azhari of limited culture whose intuition was deeper than his knowledge and understanding of things. On the other hand, his limited capacity as an artist must not be understood as a sign of limited talent but as a sign of a limited culture and an indication of

the narrowness of the intellectual climate in which he developed. He struggled in more than one sphere, and if he did not succeed fully in the field of creative art, he succeeded greatly in being the interpreter of the spirit and aspirations of his own age and of the age which followed.

In addition to his introduction of the Romantic theme in Arabic literature which paved the way for the Romantic poetry of the coming era, al-Manfalūṭi also made some contribution in the field of poetic and literary criticism. He was influenced in his critical writings by the Syro-Egyptianised school of illustrious men of letters and their movement towards innovation which was inspired by Western critical standards.[25] But it must be noted that the contribution of al-Manfalūṭi in the poetic and critical fields was negligible. He neither produced any important or even interesting poetic or critical works, nor did he have any direct influence on his generation in these two fields.

(ii) Cultural Activity in Egypt in the Second and Third Decades

On the other hand, a more direct basis for a new poetry was being laid. One important fact should be mentioned here. The poetic field in Egypt and in most Arab countries was split into two camps, a sharp division which it has never abandoned up till the present day. On the one hand, there were the successive generations of avant-garde groups of Western educated poets and critics who looked on Western poetic standards as ideal and sought to establish links with them. On the other hand, the movement of revivalism which aimed first of all at achieving a renaissance of the Classical literary treasures, coupled with the rise of nationalism, had set forth a counter trend that directed itself towards a glorification of past models of literary works. This trend was to play a great role in the literary field over the decades, dominating most of all any attempt at change in poetic forms and attitudes.

Poetry had fallen, right from the beginning of the poetic renaissance, "more readily than other genres, under the appeal of the

past."[26] The reasons for forging direct links with the Classical contribution have been discussed before. The first half of the twentieth century, however, was to see tremendous changes in Arabic poetry. Right from the second decade, it was rapidly developing its own schools and tendencies.[27] The general picture can be puzzling to the casual observer, but an accurate scrutiny of the influences to which poetry was exposed can clarify the overall picture.

The second and third decades in Egypt are of particular interest in the story of the development of Egyptian thought and creativity, due to many factors. Firstly, it was the period when Western culture and methods began to establish a real hold on the minds of the educated. Secondly, the art of novel writing began to assert itself as a new genre in Arabic literature. If al-Manfalūṭi's attempts had been 'weak' from an artistic point of view, Zainab by Muḥammad Ḥusain Haikal (1888-1956) which was published in 1914, was very good for such a pioneering attempt. It was the beginning of a supremacy to which Egyptian talent has laid a legitimate claim even up to the present time. Thirdly, the new prose literature in Egypt started to be the output mostly of Egyptian talent after a period of near monopoly by the Syrio-Egyptianised group of men of letters. Fourthly, as a result of an earlier cultural movement in Egypt and its arrival at an advanced level during the last decades of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth centuries, a large group of highly educated Egyptians rose simultaneously to intellectual eminence as writers and critics in several fields of writing. This gave Egypt a tremendous prestige over other Arab countries and created an atmosphere seething with literary activity and intellectual venture.[28] The whole of the Arab world began to look to Egypt as the centre of Arabic literature and the "protector of the Arabic language."[29] Books were being published, anthologies issued and numerous articles written on various subjects ranging from creative works of poetry and artistic prose writing to works of translation and of

social and literary analysis. This period might be the most important literary period in modern Egypt, despite the bustle of later periods. Its literary activity, however, "must be judged, not from the stand-point of a highly developed Westernized literature, but in relation to its background, audience and environment."[30]

Fifthly, a conscious trend towards the Egyptianization of literature written by Egyptian writers was released and took a complete hold on the minds of Egyptian intellectuals of this period, who included Ṭāhā Ḥusain, Salāmah Mūsa, Aḥmad Ḥasanain Haikal and ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād. This call towards the Egyptianization of literature looks strange in the light of the above statement by the Palestinian, al-Nashāshībi. But this, like so many other statements by non-Egyptian Arab writers at the time, should not be taken as a sign of a unified attitude. While Arab writers outside Egypt had continuously integrated the literature written by Egyptians into the main stream of Arabic literature, eminent Egyptian writers during this period were trying to propagate the idea of an 'Egyptian literature' distinct from the contemporary literature which was being written in the rest of the Arab world.

It should be noted here that Egypt had "formed for a long time one political, religious and cultural entity with the Arab world....It was the mighty fortress of both Arab culture and Islamic heritage."[31] But before the call for the Egyptianization of literature took place, she had been exposed to certain political and cultural happenings which helped to direct her modern political and cultural history into its own particular channel and gave opportunity to seek a different and independent outlook.

Politically, the Napoleonic campaign, the establishment of the Muḥammad ʿAli dynasty and Egypt's semi-independence from the Ottoman rule during the nineteenth century, its occupation by the British in 1882, its early political stirrings and reactions, all gave it a longer and older experience in modern political activities. Moreover, the rise of Muṣṭafa

Kāmil (1874-1908), the Dunshuwai incident of 1906, and the foundation of the political parties in 1907 and 1908 emphasised a national movement already started. All this culminated in the 1919 revolution which gave a greater and more emphatic impetus to the feelings of Egyptian nationalism and to the idea of Egypt for Egyptians. This idea was directed not only against foreign occupation but also at segregating Egypt from other Arab countries on the grounds that Egyptians were the descendents of the Pharaohs.[32]

This was enhanced and emphasised on a cultural basis. For the early discoveries in the nineteenth century of ancient Pharaonic monuments (the Rashīd Stone was deciphered by Champ/lion in 1822), and the subsequent discoveries of monuments of ancient Egyptian civilisation widened the historical perspective of the Egyptians and made them link themselves whole-heartedly with the roots of that ancient civilisation of which Europe was speaking with such enthusiasm.[33] Pharaonic themes started to appear in newspapers and magazines with ever increasing frequency and the reaction of the Egyptian poets and writers at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries to the new spirit of identification with the Pharaonic past was almost universal. Shauqi was only twenty six years old when he wrote his famous if not great poem entitled "Great Events in the Nile Valley","Kibār al-Ḥawādith fi Wādi al-Nīl,"[34] and which he declaimed at the Orientalists' Conference in 1894.[35] The Pharaonic theme appeared again and again in his poetry and in the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ and others.[36] Even Khalīl Muṭrān found himself drawn to mention Pharaonic Egypt in his poetry.[37]

The identification, on a large scale, with these strong links that bound Egyptians to a great ancient civilisation seemed to be an immense asset when the progressive Egyptian students faced a superior Western culture. The cultural attitude in Egypt had been, ever since the Muḥammad 'Ali tradition, an attitude that held a great esteem for Western

civilisation.[38] More and more students were going to the West for their higher education and by the beginning of the second decade of this century, Egypt could boast of several European educated writers and thinkers who looked at European culture, ancient (Greek and Hellenistic) and modern, with great veneration and sought to forge links with it. The efforts of Ṭāhā Ḥusain alone in this respect are a sufficient example of the way some Egyptian moderns were thinking at the time. Ṭāhā Ḥusain arrived at the conclusion that the Egyptians had never been really Oriental but had belonged to the Mediterranean family of nations. In his Mustaqbal al-Thaqāfah fī Miṣr he tried to establish the solid links which had existed throughout history with the Hellenistic civilisation.[39] There was nothing, not even Islam, he insisted, that could bar the Egyptian mind from re-adopting fully the standards of Western civilisation and progress.[40] Other writers, like Salāmah Mūsa for example, were even more extreme.[41]

On a literary basis, especially in the field of poetry, the call for the Egyptianization of culture has been affected and artificial.[42] This was different from the call to modernisation, for in any attempt at modernization, the question would not be the 'Egyptianization' of literature in a way which would distinguish it from other Arabic literature, but rather its capability to reflect the veracity, emotional and intellectual, of life around it. What is important here is the fact that what was contemporary Egyptian in the literary theme was not really alien in essence to the modern Arab experience. Aside from direct Pharaonic themes, which were never a spontaneous expression but rather the conscious reaction to a distinct call, the same kind of human experience (of conflict, suffering, deprivations, problematic existence, search for individual and national freedom) and of artistic experience (traditional hamperings and cultural heritage) existed in all the Arab world. It was the same struggle all over, on various levels of intensity.

However, we are not so much concerned here with the detailed history

of any cultural movement in one Arab country or another except in so far as such a movement was an impetus or a hindrance to the development of Arabic poetry over the decades. The call for an Egyptianized literature which rang throughout the second, third and fourth decades of this century in Egypt, brought in its wake some drawbacks. For it has helped to increase a rather self-centred attitude among Egyptian men of letters, and to weaken their ties with men of letters in the rest of the Arab world.[43] This self-imposed isolation was unfortunate for the development of Arabic poetry in Egypt. Contemporary Arab critics, writing on the subject, have overlooked this point. But one has to refer to it if one were to describe the poetic situation in Egypt correctly. Egyptian poets and their critics concentrated their interest on the Egyptian poetic output much to the exclusion of that of the rest of the Arab world. They seemed to live in a sort of shell and generally only sought examples and material either from amongst themselves, or from Western sources. Thus they were denied the benefits of the wider and more varied poetic experience of other Arab countries, as well as the benefits of other contemporary poetic experiments, many of them of quite a high level of creativity. Had they explored more into other Arab poetic fields, and sought to retain the unbreakable bonds between Arabic poetry in Egypt and Arabic poetry in other Arab countries, some writers might not have suffered a partial confusion of aesthetic poetic standards which they did. Had Ṭāhā Ḥusain himself, for example, adopted an attitude less isolated from the literary output of the other Arab countries, and had he sought to discover what was going on in other poetic fields, he would not have been as insistent as he was in 1934, on glorifying al-ʿAqqād's poetry and on naming him the leader of poets in the Arab world. In an address to a large group of eminent Egyptians who had gathered to honour al-ʿAqqād for a national anthem he

had written (the story had more complicated political intonations than seems here), he expressed his joy that the anxiety he had felt for Arabic poetry after the death of Shauqi and Ḥāfiẓ was unfounded for the new school of poetry in Egypt [of which al-ʿAqqād was a leader] had started to impose itself on the Arabs. He insisted that "the Egyptian heart, feelings and emotions....demand to be pictured in this new way which has made millions appreciate al-ʿAqqād." Therefore, he said, "let us have no fear for Arabic poetry and literature nor for the position of Egypt in poetry and literature....Put the banner of poetry in the hand of al-ʿAqqād and tell the poets and the men of letters: 'rally to this banner for he has raised it for you'."[44]

An enraged Marūn ʿAbbūd, Lebanon's foremost critic at the time and for several decades after, raised havoc over this.[45] Not only did he ridicule Ṭāhā Ḥusain's speech and attitude, in a first article, but in several others written over the years, he verbally massacred al-ʿAqqād's "futile attempts" at poetic creativeness and originality.[46] There are two important points to consider in Ṭāhā Ḥusain's attitude. Firstly his anxiety to secure for Egypt the leadership in poetry, and secondly his acceptance of al-ʿAqqād's poetry not only as good but even as worthy of the honour of leadership. A scholar of Classical poetry both Arabic and Greek, Ṭāhā Ḥusain's judgment of al-ʿAqqād's stiff, dry, ineffective though abundant verse, cannot fail to astonish the modern student of poetry. Al-ʿAqqād's poetry was never accepted by the Arab world, which was accustomed not only to Shauqi's far superior poetic output, but to a much higher standard of poetry in general.

Finally, this period can be regarded as the first period in modern times in which a systematic study of the poetic theory was offered, based on critical material borrowed mostly from the West. The link with Western standards would be made permanent in this period and from this time on, the critical theory, like the poetic art itself, sought

continuously to arrive at modernity, passing quickly, sometimes barely skimming, over the different schools of poetry and poetic theory.

There had come about, by the advent of the second decade, a certain eagerness for critical knowledge and its application. The age was ripe for some sort of harvest, for nearly a century had passed since the signs of the first awakening showed themselves and in the meantime a considerable cultural activity had taken place. But minds had to be trained in scientific research and objective evaluation of literary works. Even in the nineteenth century the "whole intellectual life of the people was thrown into confusion by the contradictions in principle between the old system of thought with its dogmatic basis and the intellectual freedom of Western scientific method....In Egypt this duality of method and the resulting confusion continued throughout the century [nineteenth] and even yet has not been eradicated."[47]

The era with which we are here concerned, namely the second and third decades of this century, is the era of direct borrowing and indirect interpretation of Western ideas on literature and life. As for aesthetic criticism, it had for long linked itself with the impressionistic evaluation of single lines and stanzas of poetry[48] leaning greatly on linguistic standards. This trend persisted side by side with the new methods of Western scientific research.

(iii) Ṭāhā Ḥusain's Critical Contribution

"The first systematic attempt at an all round evaluation of an Arabic literary figure" was produced in 1914.[49] "It was Ṭāhā Ḥusain's doctorate thesis on Abu al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrı." Ṭāhā Ḥusain's fertile mind, his enthusiasm both for Western civilisation and a progressive Egypt, his involvement with the Classical literature and his fluent, peculiarly attractive style,[50] brought him to the foreground. It is not possible here to go into the details of his general achievement, which was great and left a tremendous influence not only on the educated in Egypt, but also

on those of the Arab world at large.[51] With a sense of dedicated responsibility, he has been a "guardian of the literary citadel."[52] He felt an obligation towards his countrymen to introduce them not only to new genres of Western literature, ancient and modern, but also to the Western methods of scientific research. He has in fact "lowered the drawbridge to admit Western methods of research and the principles of Sainte-Beuve, Taine and Jules Lemaitre."[53] In this he rendered a great service to the development of poetic criticism in modern Arabic literature.

Like all the Egyptian critics of his generation, Ṭāhā Ḥusain's greatest concern with criticism in Arabic centred around poetry in general. He concentrated more, however, on the Classical poetry.[54] The two poets of modern times with whom he was most concerned were Ḥāfiẓ and Shauqui, but he also wrote on Nāji, ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā, Fawzi 'l-Maʿlūf and others. It must be observed here, however, that Ṭāhā Ḥusain, in "his criticism of younger writers....is not so much the detached observer as the self-appointed mentor."[55]

Ṭāhā Ḥusain's application of Western scientific methods to the study of the Classical poets was a vital and admirable contribution. Firstly he helped to recreate for the Arab reader a whole new picture not only of the poets about whom he wrote and their personalities but also of their background with the many forces that were at play in it.[56] Secondly he was the first important modern author to throw shades of doubt on the seemingly infallible authenticity of the Classical poetry. This authenticity had been questioned during the Classical period by authors like Ibn Qutaibah, Ibn Sallām , and al-Aṣmaʿi, but in recent times it took on quite a different aspect when brought to light by Ṭāhā Ḥusain in an age of Classical sanctimony. With the early appearance of Fi 'l-Shiʿr al-Jāhili in 1925 the sanctimony which the Classical poetic contribution had acquired in the flush of revival and re-discovery, met a challenge which was understood by a great number of readers, unreasonably, as aimed at shattering

its foundations. Deep psychological factors as well as ignorance and fanaticism combined to make of Ṭāhā Ḥusain's accusation of spuriousness in al-Jāhili literature a threat to the Arab heritage as a whole. Although there is a great scope for quiet objective controversy concerning Ṭāhā Ḥusain's conclusions, the immediate reaction was, typically, one of loud protest and utter rejection. Nevertheless, the efforts of Ṭāhā Ḥusain in this respect were the first, most powerful and most studious examples of challenge to a blind glorification of the past. They helped greatly to shake the rigidity of preconceived concepts and were a great factor in bringing about an early split between modernist and reactionary forces in the literary field.

Thirdly the new scientific approach learnt first-hand from the West and of which Ṭāhā Ḥusain was the first and boldest protagonist, left a very deep impact on the minds of his contemporaries as well as on the minds of the following generations. Arabic criticism had always been subjective and impressionistic, but from the time that Ṭāhā Ḥusain came forward with the idea of 'objectivity', a word repeated and over-emphasised by him,[57] the word began to carry great significance and has been constantly used, often affectedly, as a synonym of good criticism. But it must be pointed out here that Ṭāhā Ḥusain, despite the great service he rendered to Arabic criticism in this field, leaned a great deal on the subjective element in criticism, namely his own aesthetic appreciation and estimation of a poet's work. Although his judgment of the Classical poets was not free from this subjective attitude, (witness his predilection for al-Ma'arri)[58] he showed even more subjectivity when dealing with contemporaries. Cachia comes to the conclusion that, in the field of Western scholarship, Ṭāhā Ḥusain's real achievement was the "negation of past prejudices".[59] As for arriving at real scientific judgment he concludes that "what he has brought to Arabic criticism is not the objectivity he set out to find, but a subjectivity which, in aim at least, confines itself to literature. It

cannot be made proof against prejudice, but its prejudices will be literary, not religious or racial or personal."[60]

However, what is important here is to try to discover how great was the impact of Ṭāhā Ḥusain's criticism on the development of modern Arabic poetry. One can safely say that Ṭāhā Ḥusain was at his best when dealing with dead poets. Some social entanglement, personal prejudice or a schoolmaster attitude have helped to lessen the value of his criticism of modern poets. Aside from the fact that the Classical poetry was still largely unexplored and in dire need of a re-judgment by modern standards (a task which he undertook to do), the contemporary poetic field, with the exception of the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ and Shauqi, did not seem sufficiently worthwhile to merit his constant attention.[61] The time was too early, it seems, for a critic to foresee imminent poetic changes and to help bring them about more quickly. The forces playing within the art itself were more rapid than the capacity of the modern critics in the twenties, thirties and even forties to foresee. The poets, partly instinctively, were trying their inexperienced hands on new experiments which were largely premature and unsuccessful and the only approach a scholar-critic like Ṭāhā Ḥusain could adopt was that of an impatient don. He was not a poet for whom the development of Arabic poetry was a personal concern. What narrowed the field of modern poetry for him was the fact that he, like the other Egyptian critics and men of letters of his generation, hardly looked outside Egypt for any new material that might need evaluation and analysis.[62]

Ṭāhā Ḥusain's ideas on poetry itself vary from his firm attitude regarding the importance and indispensibility of rhyme, metre and a good choice of words,[63] to his insistence that literature must reflect life and that the poet and writer must enjoy the freedom that enables them to express themselves unhampered by fear, social and literary prejudice or dogmatic conceptions.[64] He was among the first writers to raise this

question which is still at the heart of the literary discussion today.

Despite his knowledge of French and Classical Greek literatures, Ṭāhā Ḥusain fell into the traditional Arab mistake of limiting words to their immediate connotations, which was a deformation of his intuitive taste.[65] He came to prefer "the exact and explicit rather than the evocative."[66] Although this set a bad example in modern Arabic criticism, confirming a traditional weakness,[67] it did not present a major issue in his criticism of the poetry of the thirties and early forties, for the articles he wrote show, in general, a sound judgment. His main ideas on ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā and Ibrāhīm Nāji, for example, prove themselves in retrospect not too far from the truth. He regarded ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā superior to Nāji.[68] Nāji he described to be a poet of good but only average talent.[69]

Among the first generation of Western educated critics in Egypt, Ṭāhā Ḥusain remained the most liberal and modern in his conceptions on poetry. His attitude towards the free verse movement which flourished first in the fifties is not the firm and assured attitude of a pioneer who knew the whole secrets of the game, but the attitude of a liberal-minded critic who understood that the dimensions of art could not be decided and drawn forever. He did not feel at home in the new era that had dawned on Arabic poetry, but knew that he must not reject it. From his general attitude one can sense that he felt that the new poetry, in its better examples, was perhaps the successful culmination of a long-term experiment. He never volunteered to give a final judgment but rather gave his opinion in vague and general terms, encouraging innovation[69] but not attempting a direct assessment or criticism of the new poetry[70] which his equally famous contemporary, al-ʿAqqād, was condemning in such loud terms.[71]

Footnotes

1. Ḍaif declares that al-ʿAqqād, Shukri, al-Māzini and others failed as poets, Shauqi, p.118.

2. Al-Zayyāt, a younger contemporary of al-Manfalūṭi describes how people turned their unparallelled attention to him as soon as his writings began to appear in Al-Muʾayyad periodical, "Muṣṭafā Luṭfi 'l-Manfalūṭi, bi Munāsabat Dhikrāhu 'l-Thālithah ʿAshrah", Al-Risālah, No.210, 12th July, 1937, p.1122.

3. Salāmah Mūsā writing in 1923 asserts his popularity at the time, "Muṣṭafā Luṭfi 'l-Manfalūṭi", Al-Hilāl, November, 1923, No.32, ii, 156; Gibb, writing at the end of the twenties, asserts the same thing, "Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature, II, Manfalūṭi and the 'New Style'", B.S.O.A.S., 1928-1930, V, ii, 316; Ramādi, writing in the fifties declares him to be still popular, Aʿlām, p.73; Ḍaif, writing in the same decade asserts the same, Al-Adab al-ʿArabi, p.230.

4. Most writers agree on the merit of his style. See Salāmah Mūsā, op.cit., p.155; Gibb, "Manfalūṭi and the New Style", p.317, Ramādī, Aʿlām, pp.75, 76 and 77; al-Zayyāt, op.cit., Al-Risālah, Nos. 210, 12th July, 1937, p.1122 and 214, 9th August, 1937, p.1282; Ḍaif, op.cit., pp.202, 203, 204-5, 206; Marūn ʿAbbūd, however, writes most disparagingly of his style, see Judud wa Qudamāʾ second edition, Beirut, 1963, pp.102-3, 112-3, 250-3. Al-Māzini attacked him in his (and al-ʿAqqād's) book Al-Dīwān fi 'l-Naqd wa 'l-Adab, Vol.II, Cairo, 1921, pp.3-32. However, al-ʿAqqād in Murājaʿāt fi 'l-Adab wa 'l-Funūn, Cairo, [1926], pp.172-7, admits rather hesitantly his achievement of modernity of style but denies him enough credit for it, for it was, in his opinion, only due to an appropriate moment of time, not to courage and good choice.

5. On the fact that he knew no foreign language see Ramādī, Aʿlām, p.76; Gibb, "Manfalūṭi and the New Style", **loc.cit.**

6. The intermediaries translated the text into simple, unliterary Arabic which al-Manfalūṭi re-wrote; see Ramādī, loc.cit., Ḍaif, Al-Adab al-ʿArabi, p.229.

7. Al-Manfalūṭi came early under the influence of the Syro-Egyptianized school and their translations from Western literature, getting acquainted through Farah Anṭūn and Al-Jāmiʿah magazine with Rousseau, Hugo and other Romantic writers, see Najm, "Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah" p.319.

8. Which he translated into a novel entitled Al-Shāʿir or Cyrano de Bergerac.

9. Which he translated into a novel entitled Fī Sabīl al-Tāj.

10. Which he translated into a novel (probably his most famous) entitled Majdūlīn, aw Taḥta Zilāl al-Zaizafūn.

11. Which he translated into another very famous novel entitled Al-Faḍīlah or Paul wa Virgīnī.

12. On the Romantic mood of the society in Egypt at the beginning of the century, see Anwar al-Maʿaddāwi ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā, al-Shāʿir wa 'l-Insān, Baghdad, 1965, pp.10-1, 12, 23-9.

13. Luwīs ʿAwaḍ, Dirāsāt fī Adabina 'l-Ḥadīth, p.158. ʿAwaḍ also cites al-Zayyāt with al-Manfalūṭi as an originator of the Romantic mood, ibid.; so does al-Maʿaddāwi, op.cit., p.26, mentioning two translated Romantic works by al-Zayyāt, namely Ālām Verter and Raphael. But al-Zayyāt's style is too Classical to allow the natural flow of Romantic feelings, the balanced, symmetrical sentences holding in check the spontaneous warmth of the kind that overflowed from the pen of al-Manfalūṭi; for a criticism of his "symmetrical" style, see M. Mandūr, Mīzān, pp.22-4.

14. Ramādi, A'lām, p.77.

15. Ḍaif, Al-Adab al-'Arabi, p.229.

16. See what al-Zayyāt says about himself and his own generation as quoted by al-Ma'addāwi, op.cit., pp.23-25.

17. Gibb says, "The inquiet, struggling, groping spirit of the age found characteristic literary expression in the work of Sayyid Muṣṭafā Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭi", loc.cit.

18. For a detailed record of the reflection of social and political events in modern Arabic poetry see al-Maqdisi's Ittijāhāt. In this book al-Maqdisi's interest is centred on this, and the poetry quoted or mentioned is never selected or judged.

19. Op.cit., pp.36-37.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., pp.33-34.

22. See Gibb, op.cit., p.317.

23. Writers on Arabic thought might disagree, at first sight, with this statement, for restlessness and a contemplative, sometimes rebellious attitude towards certain norms of life had been expressed even before Shauqi's generation. But I am not assessing here the development of Arabic thought among a select intelligentsia, only the general mood of the eras concerned which manifested itself in popular reactions.

24. On his "natural tendency ... to melancholy and sentimentality" see Gibb, op.cit., p.318.

25. Najm, "Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah", p.319.

26. P. Cachia, Tāha Ḥusayn, p.29.

27. In this context al-'Aqqād also says: "If we surveyed Arabic poetry from the end of the nineteenth century till the middle of the twentieth, we would not fail to see that it carries the influence of every poetic school [in the West] ... this appearing in both theme and manner of approach." From Al-Lughat al-Shā'irah, Cairo, 1960, p.158.

28. Is'āf al-Nashāshībī, in his speech, op.cit., says "If Cairo is not the political centre of the Arab world, ... it is the literary [al-lughawiyyah] capital ..." Speaking of the literary renaissance he said, "There came Maḥmūd [al-Bārūdi], then this genius of poetry, Aḥmad Shauqi, then Al-Muqtaṭaf, and then this Arab Egyptian heirarchy who count among their numbers the greatest writers, poets orators, critics, thinkers, scholars, theologians and artists, each of them being great in his own field ... all this will not pass away so long as there is Egypt in the world."

29. Ibid.

30. Gibb, "Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature, III, Egyptian Modernists", B.S.O.A.S., 1928-1930, V, iii, 466.

31. 'Umar Daqqāq, op.cit., p.106.

32. See ibid., pp.107-8.

33. Ibid., pp.108-9.

34. Al-Shauqiyyāt, I, 1-20.

35. Ibid., p.1.

36. For a single example from Ḥāfiẓ see his poem "Miṣr", Dīwān Ḥāfiẓ, II, 89-94.

37. See Dīwān al-Khalīl, III, 166-7.

38. Cachia says, op.cit., p.42 "The impetus towards emulation of the West was already overwhelming, and retreat from it unthinkable."

39. Cairo, 1938, p.6 et seq.

40. Ibid., p.29; see also Hourani, op.cit., the chapter on Ṭāhā Ḥusain, especially pp.31-2.

41. See Fi 'l-Hayāt wa 'l-Adab, Cairo, n.d., pp.74-6; also Al-Yaum wa 'l-Ghad, Cairo, 1927, p.256.

42. See S. Mūsa, ibid., pp.236-8, 250-2 et passim.

43. See Shafīq Jabrī, Muḥammad Kurd ʿAli, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1957, p.62, on Kurd ʿAli's resentment because his work was neglected by Egyptians; also pp.63 and 64; see also Maʿrūf al-Raṣāfī, Dīwān al-Raṣāfī, 6th edition, Cairo, 1959, p.171, for a poem expressing resentment against what he called Egypt's "fanatic" neglect of non-Egyptian contribution. Many more examples could be cited here but these examples by two of the most famous authors of the period, one Syrian, the other Iraqi, should be sufficient.

44. From Al-ʿAqqād, Dirāsah wa Taḥlīl, by several writers, ed. by Khalīl al-Tūnisi, Cairo, [prob. after 1961 and before 1964], p.232.

45. See ʿAla al-Mihakk pp.16-26 for a lengthy comment on the subject.

46. These will be discussed fully in the chapter on al-ʿAqqād.

47. Gibb, B.S.O.A.S., V, ii, 312.

48. Cachia, op.cit., pp.37 and 177.

49. Ibid., p.37.

50. See what Gibb says about his style, B.S.O.A.S., V, iii, 457.

51. See Hourani, op.cit., p.326.

52. Cachia, op.cit., p.179.

53. Ibid.

54. See Maʿ Abī 'l-ʿAlā' Fī Sijnihī, Cairo, 1930, Tajdīd Dhikrā Abi 'l-ʿAlā', Cairo, 1937, and Ṣaut Abi 'l-ʿAlā', Cairo, 1944, his bulky book Maʿ al-Mutanabbī, Cairo, 1936, his famous and controversial book Fi 'l-Shiʿr al-Jāhilī, 1925 which he republished with additions under the title Fi 'l-Adab al-Jāhilī, Cairo, 1927, his first two volumes of Ḥadīth al-Arbiʿā', Cairo, I and II, 1937, and his many essays and lectures on Classical poets mainly of the Abbasid period. See Min Ḥadīth al-Shiʿr wa 'l-Nathr, Cairo, 1948 (first published Cairo 1936) for articles on Abī Tammām, pp.94-112, al-Buḥturi pp.113-133, Ibn al-Rūmi 134-154 and Ibn al-Muʿtazz, 155-176.

55. Cachia, op.cit., p.180.

56. Ibid., p.167.

57. Ibid., p.137.

58. See ibid., p.175.

59. Cachia, ibid., p.137 says "The negation of past prejudices is all that Ṭāhā Ḥusayn's Cartesianism may be said to consist of."

60. Ibid., p.142. However, Ṭāhā Ḥusain himself admitted favouritism for Ḥāfiẓ against Shauqi, see Ḥāfiẓ wa Shauqi, pp.177-8; moreover, his speech on al-ʿAqqād in 1934, op.cit., shows a certain impulsiveness on his part. There are several examples of this throughout his career. Cachia, on p.175, gives an example of political prejudice in Ṭāhā Ḥusain's violent condemnation of Maḥmūd Abū al-Wafā's poetry, (Ḥadīth al-Arbiʿā', III, 210-9).

61. In Ḥadīth al-Arbiʿā', III, 210, he says that he feels deeply sad when he remembers how he used to be hard on Ḥāfiẓ and Shauqi a few years earlier whereas now it has become easy to please critics, for all verse has become poetry and all prose has become literature.

62. He wrote, however, on Ilyā Abū Māḍi's Al-Jadāwil, Ḥadīth al-Arbiʿā', III, pp.220-7 and on Fawzi al-Maʿlūf's ʿAlā Bisāṭ al-Rīḥ, ibid, pp.201-9, underestimating the former but praising the latter very highly.

63. See Fi 'l-Adab al-Jāhili, pp.343-8.

64. See Khiṣām wa Naqd, 2nd edition, Beirut, 1960, pp.8-11.

65. Cachia, op.cit., p.178.

66. Ibid., p.179.

67. Examples of his literary mindedness are several; for a single example see Ḥadīth al-Arbiʿā', III, his comment on the title of M. Abū al-Wafā's diwan, Anfās Muḥtariqah which he translates literally as "Burning breath" saying, "I do not like the title, nor do I understand what is meant by it, for people's breath is always burning, and so is the breath of animals. It would have been sufficient for him to call his diwan The Breath ...", p.212. See also Cachia, op.cit., pp.178-9 for a fuller description of his blunders, especially his comment on Nāji.

68. Ḥadīth al-Arbiʿā', III, 171.

69. Ibid., pp.170 and 171.

70. He had earlier encouraged ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā in his attempts to innovate in the theme of Arabic poetry, saying, "Some people accuse our friend /Ṭāhā/ of Westernizing poetry, but I thank him for this ... and see it an honour to Arabic poetry and an exercise to the Oriental taste and to the Arabic language." Ḥadīth al-Arbiʿā', III, p.165. See also his chapter "Al-Tajdīd fi 'l-Shiʿr" in his book Min Adabinā 'l-Muʿāsir, 2nd edition, Beirut, 1966, especially pp.32, 34 and 35-6.

71. For an estimation of Ṭāhā Ḥusain as a critic see also the article by Francesco Gabrieli entitled "Ṭāhā Ḥusain Critico", in Ṭāhā Ḥusain, a book published by the Instituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli, 1964.

(iv) The Dīwān Group

As has been said above, a large part of the critical theory on poetry was written in Egypt in the second and third decades of this century. One cannot help but regret, however, that the poetic field in Egypt during that time was devoid of a great avant-garde talent to give an authentic expression to all the enthusiastic outpourings of critical theory and protest. The theory was learnt first-hand from Western sources, mainly English. The protest was mainly directed against the trenches of the neo-Classical school, particularly against Shauqi and to a lesser degree, against Ḥāfiẓ. The first important protagonists of this critical movement in poetry were three friends who felt the urgent need for Arabic poetry to undergo a drastic change. They were ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Shukri (1886-1958), Ibrāhīm ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Māzini (1890-1949) and ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād (1889-1964). Shukri and al-Māzini met at the Khediwe Training College from which they both graduated in 1909, al-Māzini going to teach and Shukri going to Sheffield University to study English literature. Shukri returned in 1912, and, with al-Māzini, met al-ʿAqqād. These three began writing simultaneously in al-Bayān magazine as well as in al-Jarīdah newspaper,[1] "and from that time the outlines of the new way in poetry and criticism began to appear".[2]

The three came to be referred to as 'the English school' but the name by which they are now known is the 'Dīwān Group'.* They were well versed in English literature and were acquainted with the literature of other Western countries.[3] However, they "might have benefited more from English criticism than from poetry and other genres of literature".[4] This

* This name does not seem appropriate, for it was given to the three with reference to Al-Dīwān fi 'l-Adab wa 'l-Naqd, the book of criticism written by al-ʿAqqād and al-Māzini in 1921. In fact Shukri was mercilessly attacked in it. However, this name will be used in this work because this is the generally accepted name. They are called the "Dīwān Group" by Mandūr in his critical works, by ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dusūqi in Jamāʿat Apollo and by M.Z. Sallām in his book Al-Naqd al-ʿArabi 'l-Muʿāsir, Cairo, 1961.

f 308 FN 6

school, al-ʿAqqād declares, was profoundly influenced by Hazlitt and his ideas on poetic theories.[5]

Shukri, al-Māzini and al-ʿAqqād are the writers who have laid the cornerstone of modern poetic criticism in Egypt,[6] and, with Nuʿaimah can be safely termed the first major writers on modern poetic theory in Arabic. This is not to obscure, in any way, the modern, well-guided critical background furnished by Muṭrān in the preceding decade, despite its modest voice. Its value, moreover, will not be diminished by the fact that al-ʿAqqād denied Muṭrān any merit in the field, as has been mentioned above.

Shukri published his writings on the poetic concept in al-Bayān, al-Jarīdah, al-Muqtataf and afterwards in Apollo. He also wrote a forward to most of his diwans in which he discussed poetry and poetic standards. Shukri's critical as well as poetic activity was at its strongest in the second decade of this century. Between 1909 and 1918 he issued seven diwans. In the third decade he suffered a relapse as a result, perhaps, of al-Māzini's bitter attack on him in Al-Dīwān. Shukri, in the introduction to his fifth anthology, had written about the plagiarism of al-Māzini. Al-Māzini avenged himself in the first volume of Al-Dīwān, not only reversing the high praise he had showered on Shukri in an earlier book entitled Shiʿr Hāfiẓ (1915), but going so far as to accuse Shukri of madness and to call him the 'idol of tricks' , "Ṣanam al-Alāʿīb" .
Shukri lived a long life after that but his poetic energy seems to have waned considerably during the rest of his life.[7]

Al-Māzini was of a different nature. His poetry as well as his early prose works reflect an erratic and fiery temperament. Gradually, however, this gave way to the sarcastic, humerous writings which made him deservedly famous for his humerous writings among Arab readers for several generations. His diwan entitled Dīwān al-Māzini was published in two parts. The first appeared in 1913 with a preface by al-ʿAqqād. The second appeared in 1917.[8] It was in 1915, however, that he published two

critical works. The first was a treatise on poetry entitled Al-Shi'r, Ghāyātuhu wa Wasā'iluhu (1915) in which he discusses the methods and aims of poetry. The second was a little book of applied criticism entitled Shi'r Hāfiz. In 1921 he published, with the collaboration of al-'Aqqād, his most famous critical work, the above-mentioned Al-Dīwān, which appeared in two consecutive volumes. Other critical works by him were two collections of articles, in 1924 and 1927, under the titles of Ḥaṣād al-Hashīm and Qabd al-Rīḥ respectively.*

Al-'Aqqād was the strongest and most versatile literary personality of the three and his interest in poetry remained with him all his life. Between 1916 and 1958 he issued ten anthologies of poetry,[9] attempting experiments in poetry to demonstrate his theories. His writings on poetry began earlier. It has been said that he had written on the unity of a poem as early as 1908.[10] In 1912 he issued Khulāṣat al-Yaumiyyah in which he collected his articles on literature and life. In 1913 two anthologies appeared for which he had written the introductions. These were the second anthology of Shukri and the first anthology of al-Māzini. In these introductions, entitled "Al-Shi'r wa Mazāyah" and "Khawāṭir 'an al-Ṭab' wa 'l-Taqlīd" respectively[11] al-'Aqqād had opportunity to introduce the new poetic theories which he was to expound over the years. Other articles by al-'Aqqād on poetry and the poetic theory continued to appear either as introductions to his own anthologies or as separate articles. His above mentioned book, al-Dīwān, was succeeded by several other collections of essays which often included several articles on poetry. These collections include al-Fusūl published in 1922; Muṭāla'āt fi 'l-Kutub wa 'l-Ḥayāt, 1924; Murāja'āt fi 'l-Adab wa 'l-Funūn, 1925; Sā'āt baina 'l-Kutub, 1927. His interesting book devoted to the history of modern poetry in Egypt was Sh'uarā' Miṣr wa Bī'ātuhum fi 'l-Jīl al-Mādi (1937) has been discussed above. Later on, in 1955, another collection of

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* Only works relevant to this study are mentioned.

articles on poetry and literature appeared under the title of Ashtāt Mujtamiʿāt fi 'l-Lughah wa 'l-Adab, and in 1960 he published Al-Lughah al-Shāʿirah.

Moreover, al-ʿAqqād, true to the fashion of his generation, wrote also on some of the Classical poets. A book on Ibn al-Rūmi appeared in 1931, another on ʿUmar Ibn Abī Rabīʿah in 1943 and a third on Jamīl Buthainah in 1944. Writings on other Classical poets were also included in his several collections.

The rebellion of the three poet-critics was marked by two main features. Firstly it was timely. The neo-Classical school had been confirming a concept of poetry which, had it continued in the field alone, would have entrenched itself so strongly that to arrive at modernity would have become an extremely arduous task. Backed by Shuaqi's talent, it had acquired a great hold on the minds and hearts of the Arabs, more especially so because it was almost the only form of poetry that had undergone a thorough revival in modern times. The issue of the moment was the introduction of tools that would be able to destroy the trenches of the neo-Classical school and form the basis on which a more gifted generation of poets might build a new poetic structure. With ridicule, with bitter unrelenting argument and an enthusiasm for poetry bordering at veneration, they were able to draw the attention of their contemporaries to the vital issues at hand.

Secondly the rebellion of the three critics seems startlingly sudden. For despite the background furnished by Muṭrān's mild theorizations on poetry, their break-away from oppressive, old-fashioned, ruling ideas on poetry, as it manifested itself in their critical writings, was dramatic and complete. To them the neo-Classical poetry, which was at its peak in the second decade, was devoid of all the prerequisites of good poetry. The works of Shauqi and Ḥāfiẓ, the two greatest protagonists of the neo-Classical poetry in Egypt (and in the case of Shauqi in the whole of the Arab world) suffered strong direct attacks from them.

But although they spoke in decisive terms on the 'ideal' poetry, they were not able to break away in their own poetry from some of the worst defects of the traditional verse which they criticised (the dogmatic expression, the parcelling of thoughts and ideas into geometric divisions, the sudden introduction of aphorisms that end with the two hemistich . verse, etc.).[12] This is accounted for perhaps by two factors, irstly that they had a limited poetic talent, and secondly because the strength of the poetic tradition prevented them from putting into practice the theories they formed and the critical ideas they read and propagated. The forces operating within the art itself do not always coincide with the growth of the theoretical knowledge about that art. When an art is alive, there is always a process of development and deterioration that prompts change and progress. It arrives at a point of saturation and rejection and then a need for new methods and attitudes appears. So long as an art is alive there is a perpetual search for forces of renewal and restoration. Two things, which are not necessarily interdependent, can hurry the process of growth: the appearance of a genius in the field, and the knowledge of new artistic tools and methods. But the process, nevertheless, cannot be over-hurried before the art is mature enough to assimilate it in natural form.

This theory by no means ignores or belittles the relationship of poetry to social and political change. This is where the expression 'living art' finds its meaning and emphasis. For an art is alive only when it thrives within a living society, a society that itself yields to change and development and is open to new ideas and influences. Yet the relationship, the interaction between social change and poetic development is not such a closely connected one as it might seem; for aesthetic standards, especially those which have become deeply rooted in the aesthetic concept of a people, are very slow to undergo change, as has been discussed above. Modern Arab critics and writers on modern Arabic poetry

have tended nearly always to link it with political and social happenings. In doing this they have overlooked the fact that the process of creativity and the use of artistic tools do not yield immediately to every change in the environment, but are rather more slow in their adaptation to such changes. The division of the history of Arabic poetry in Egypt, for example, into well defined periods and turning points at such dates as 1882, 1919 and 1952* would be a severe parcelling of artistic growth which arrives at absurdity. Revolutions do awaken the emotional impulses of a people, but the immediate activity that might be seen in art as a result of the political upsurge of life need not be linked directly with real artistic growth. And although it might help at times to forge definite changes in poetry, it might be sometimes limited to an increase in the quantity of poetic production on the one hand, and to the introduction of new themes on the other. In fact the political promptings in modern Arabic poetry have sometimes helped towards its levelling down, the national theme often becoming a passport by which the mediocre were admitted to the poetic field with a resultant levelling down of the standards of aesthetic appreciation.

The general trend which characterised the poetry of the three Dīwān poets was the subjective trend. Their verse was the expression of personal feelings and ideas and there is a genuine attempt to get rid of the neo-Classical poet's involvement with the 'public event' and the outer periphery of life.[13] The introduction of the emotional, subjective element into poetry was a great step forward and the greatest achievement of these poets. Their poetry could be regarded as a stepping stone to the poetry of experience which was to be written a little later. Its lack of permanence or even of immediate genuine success does not diminish the importance of its intermediate position.

The Romantic mood, which had begun to settle itself on the society was caught by the three poets, but only to a limited degree. They are

* These are the dates of the Arabist revolution, and of the 1919 and 1952 revolutions in Egypt.

described as an angry, hesitant and self-centred group, afflicted with anxiety[14] and with what some writers call 'the malady of the age'.[15] Shukri, who was the most genuine poet of the three, depicted the state of mind of the Egyptian youth of his class in what appears to be an original prose work entitled I'tirafāt "Confessions"[16] which he published in 1916. Mandūr believes the book to be the best of its kind in Arabic.[17] In this book the Egyptian youth is depicted as a collection of day dreamers. They are described as spineless, self-conceited, impatient, suspicious and plaintive. They suffer from feelings of despair and are incapable of systematic thinking. The world itself is depicted as a place of trouble and boredom. In fact the book, as Mandūr presents it, seems to be a document on the social and psychological state of the nation, reflecting the feelings of despondency and despair which the Egyptian youth was experiencing at the time.[18]

Yet despite all this, this group of poets was not able to give a firm confirmation to the Romantic mood in poetry. Although al-Māzini and Shukri reflected the Romantic mood in the bulk of their poetic works, they did so crudely, for their poetic tools were too weak to assimilate it successfully into art. Their poetic expression remained analytical and direct, lacking the evocative power and infective warmth of later Romantic poetry. It was very emotional but seemed, nevertheless, to reflect a pose, a sort of acquired attitude not rising spontaneously from experience. This merits notice, for the life of these two poets and their personalities proclaim the truth of the mood they were trying so hard to reflect in their verse. Partly from lack of genuine talent, partly because of the resistance of the tools of Arabic poetry at the time, which was then at the peak of its neo-Classical period, their genuinely unhappy mood was unable to reflect itself successfully in poetry.

But the attention drawn by this group to their persistent writings on poetry was vital. Ever since the days of the Syro-Egyptian writers,

there had grown in the atmosphere a general esteem for Western critical standards. The three critics opened, in the name of modern concepts borrowed mostly from the West, the campaign against the old poetic concepts and came out with new ideas on poetry, its essence and its value. They insisted on several points concerning poetry the most important of which was their call that poetry should probe deep into the self and get its inspiration from human experience. Moreover, they urged the poets to search for the essential in things and refused, on the theoretical level,[19] the poetry of occasion and of public events. Above all they insisted on the unity of the poem.

Shukri seems to have been the guide to the other two in poetic theory at the beginning of their careers.[20] His ideas are propagated by the other two in many articles that have been written on the poetic theory, with some variations. Many interesting and important points are discussed by Shukri in several introductions which he wrote to his different anthologies, especially to the third, fourth and fifth. Of particular interest is his introduction to the fifth anthology, published in 1916, in which his full theory on poetry is manifest. It is "varied and extensive",[21] its greatest importance lying in its modernity, for one can recognise in Shukri's ideas the basis of many of the ideas advocated by contemporary critics in the Arab world. This, however, should not be taken as a proof that Shukri's writings on poetry did spread much beyond Egypt, for the poet does not seem to have exerted much direct influence beyond the limits of his own country. It is only a proof of Shukri's earlier assimilation and interpretation of a Western critical education from which other poets also were to benefit later on.

The influence of the English Romantic school on Shukri is very apparent. Reading his ideas, one immediately meets with a new attitude towards poetry. The role of poetry is elevated. The poet's place in life is lofty and distinctly different from that of the ordinary person.[22]

"The true poet sees that poetry is the most glorious thing he can do in life and [believes] that he was born for it and that it is not a complement to his life but its very essence."[23] From now on we shall encounter writings on poetry that elevate the poet's role and regard poetry as a revered branch of art. One gets the impression, however, that Shukri wrote in this strain more out of fascination with the Romantic ideas on poetry than out of a really deep understanding of the subject. The stigma of immaturity appears in his own writings on the subject and also in those of his two friends.[24] Shukri's idea, for example, that "every genius in poetry is worthy of being called a prophet"[25] seems to the modern reader merely a statement said for the sake of glorification rather than as the result of a true understanding of the role of the poet as a prophet predicting the true feelings and aspirations of his society. There is nothing in Shukri's poetry to show that he understood the word "prophet" in this or in any other such significant context.

Poetry in his opinion "penetrates deep into the soul and strips it of its secrets".[26] Again there is nothing in his poetry to show that he was able to penetrate deep into the realms of the soul and record the kinds of conflict, emotional and spiritual, that might take place there. On the contrary, his poetry has remained on a rather superficial level. He has been able to reflect in its greatest bulk feelings and experiences of a subjective nature, and to establish in poetry some link with the human heart,[27] but he has been able only rarely[28] to delve deep into the self and strip it naked to the world. This is a very interesting point if we compare his poetry with his revelations in his original prose work I'tirāfāt, mentioned above. Here in prose Shukri roved freely, depicting an explosive contour of society as he experienced it, bringing to the fore his dark impressions, hatred, revulsion, despair and final condemnation as he was never able to do in poetry. This is again a proof that the poetic tools were not sufficiently flexible in the hands of the poets of the time and

could not be manoeuvred to the best advantage. Most of Shukri's poetry gravitated around the love theme and the greater part of this follows the traditional bent of love-poetry in Arabic: the playful or plaintive tone, the game of words, the pseudo-fascination with 'purity', the repetitive and limited experience. The poet's capability of introspection was accomplished only in part. He spoke of personal experience but was not able to pave the way in poetry towards real emotional veracity.

In fact Shukri's poetry has proved difficult to judge by the critics of the thirties and forties. Mandūr, the most sober critic among them, seems to falter in opinion when he tries to assess Shukri's poetry.[29] This might be due to the fact that his poetry hesitates on the threshold of art and is not always flagrantly inferior. But it contains numerous examples where traditional themes, banality, sentimentality, structural weakness, a prosaic style and an absurdity of diction prevail. The following examples show plainly his weakness of structure and his absurd use of words:

30 بائع باع رخيصا عمره بعلالات المنى وهو غبين
وقلاه لا قلى مستضعف يبتغي الآمال او حز الوتين
واستقاد العيش لا تذرسه صولة العادات بالداء الدفين

and this:

31 كنت في العيش منظرا يبعث البشر وللنفس بهجة واعتصاما

It is probably with Shukri's poetry that the use of words in a weak structural context begins among several poetic innovators in Egypt. He has a strange, non-poetic diction and phraseology that can only be explained by the fact that he was trying hard to engineer a change in the traditional use of language but, owing to a limited capability, was unable to achieve his goal. Although his use of language is sometimes correct from a lexicographer's point of view, the words seem out of place and precariously situated in the sentence. There is nothing here of Shauqi's glorious use of words nor of his powerful sentence formation. However, it is simple to understand Shukri's dilemma. His rebellion was directed particularly against Shauqi's methods of poetry-writing, of which language was an

especially important element. But only a poet as equally endowed as Shauqi himself, could have accomplished, single-handed, a revolution in the language of poetry which Shauqi had so strongly confirmed.[32]

A staunch believer in innovation, Shukri made experiments with blank verse. The first poem in blank verse appeared in his first diwan[33] whilst in his second diwan he included several poems in blank verse varying in length.[34] In all these poems he followed the order of the two hemistichs and improvised no methods to compensate for the loss of the habitual music at the end of the verse. The experiment failed completely.[35] It was, it seems, too early for Arabic poetry to attempt an experiment with blank verse before it could undergo a change in the basic two hemistich form. For this form is too symmetrical and geometrically divided with regular cycles of rhythm in each verse. The verse seems to close at the end and to gather itself into one distinct entity. This is why, perhaps, it was regarded as a mark of perfection that each verse, which was a closed musical unit, should exhaust its own content of meaning. It is only the recurrent rhyme that makes the unifying element in poems of this form. No matter how a poem is united in theme and spirit, the rigid, symmetrical division of the two hemistich verse and its equilibrium seem to separate it from the other verses and to make it imperative to have the binding musical element of the rhyme. This is why "running on" in blank verse does not help the poet, so long as he sticks to the regular, two hemistich form. This basic characteristic of the two hemistich form proved a barrier to the adaptation of blank verse as Shukri used it.

Shukri, moreover, has an interssting discussion on the role of the simile and the role of the imagination in poetry. This is important, because the whole conception of the metaphor was to undergo a vital change in modern Arabic poetry and it is interesting to note the beginning of the discussion on image in poetry which flourished in the fifties and sixties. Shukri insists that imagination "is not limited to the invention of similes,

but embodies other elements in the poem like theme, ideas and the general spirit of the poem".[36] As for the simile, "it is never to be sought for itself, because its value lies in its capacity to arouse a memory, a hope, an emotion ... or to reveal a truth".[37] These ideas are very important for those early days. They are in fact an attempt to put an end to the linguistic play of words of the past generation of poets, which, despite the efforts of the neo-Classical school, still lingered behind, even in some of the best examples of their poetry.

Among the ideas propagated by Shukri was the idea of the universality of poetry. The poet "does not write for ... one special people but for the human mind and soul everywhere. He, moreover, does not write [only] for the present day but for every day and every epoch".[38] These ambitious ideas were also propagated by al-'Aqqād, as will be seen. Despite their pretentiousness, they are a sign of the intellectual freedom enjoyed by poets and writers at the beginning of the century. Later on poetry would be regarded by many writers as a social function and would be related to the poet's patriotic sense of obligation. Throughout several decades, the cry was to ring out insisting on the vitality of poetry as a propagator of national feelings and a record of national life, as will be shown later.

There is no sign of a direct influence by Shukri on the modern Arab poets outside Egypt. He is little known in the rest of the Arab world. He published his anthologies mainly in the second decade. This was the time when Shauqi's pan-Arabic fame began to flourish, a fame which grew into colossal dimensions in the third and fourth decades and overshadowed any other poetry in Egypt of the kind Shukri was writing with its concern with the self, its quieter tones and above all its often weak phraseology. But the story must have been different with Egyptian poets who grew up to know Shukri and to read his poetry. Shukri enjoyed quite a good reputation in Egyptian literary circles during the second and third decades. The powerful campaign launched by him and his friends could not have failed to

influence the younger generation of poets considerably. One can conclude that although Muṭrān might be regarded as the first innovator in modern poetry, Shukri was the first real rebel. He tried, as no one before him, to cleave a completely new path and argued the importance of poetry and the necessity of modernising it with vigour, courage and insistence.

In his Al-Shi'r, Ghāyātuhu wa Wasā'iluh, al-Māzini also sings the praises of the poet. But, like Shukri, there is nothing in his poetry that can fulfil the remarkable role he assigns to the poet as the guide and interpreter of sacred inspiration and divine wisdom.[39] Unlike Shukri, he believed in a special language for poetry probably influenced in this by Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr's ideas on the subject.[40] The special regard he had for the language of poetry did not allow, above all for the decorative play of words prevalent in the poetry of former generations, and he condemns it severely, insisting that words are never to be sought for themselves but are meant to draw an image or arouse an emotion.[41] Moreover, al-Māzini's poetry succeeded in making a link with the human heart and in being the expression of the emotions. In this, al-Māzini was in harmony with his own ideas on the matter. Poetry, he had said, remains the product of the emotions and feelings.[42]

A very important point is discussed by al-Māzini in this book. He attacks poetic prose in no uncertain terms. "This problem," he insists, "shows that a great ignorance has come over people and a drastic mistake is being made by them. For how can prose be poetry? Yet most people in this ... country believe that metre is not necessary for poetry and that there is some writing which is poetry but does not employ metre. This stupidity ... has driven some people to try this new kind of poetry thinking that they have accomplished something good and have invented some new kind of art ... "[43] This is interesting here, at this early date, for it shows that the argument against prose started quite early in Egypt.

In his book, Shi'r Ḥāfiẓ al-Māzini's attack on the older poet was

bitter and unrelenting. He regretted it afterwards.[44] Yet this book, despite the apparent prejudice manifested in it, is of great value, for it is the first direct attack on any of the neo-Classical poets. Only an outpouring of vehement criticism pretending to be knowledgeable and confident as al-Māzini's did, could shake to any degree the firm traditional conception that people had of poetry and its role. Oblique, hesitant attacks from less pretentious sources could not have achieved much change in the conception of poetry at the time. It does not contradict this idea that al-Māzini in his book, Al-Dīwān, revoked some of the main ideas he had put forward in this book, namely his great eulogy of Shukri's poetry which he described, in the first book, as the synonym of what modern poetry should be.[45]

Al-Māzini's bitter attack on Shukri in Al-Dīwān was prejudiced and destructive.[46] The personal, bitter exposition of Shukri, the prejudice, the pretentiousness and the emotional argument are a relapse for modern Arabic criticism. It was the most vicious contradiction to the idea of objectivity in criticism with which Ṭāhā Ḥusain had been trying so hard to convince the critics in Egypt.

In his poetry, al-Māzini was the most apparently Romantic of the three poets. An outpouring of Romantic pessimistic emotions, a surge of rebellious sentiments, his verse was an immediate divorce from the objective poetry where the personality of the poet disappears behind the public façade. Here is a poetry of the self, which is freed from the social restraint of a public minded generation. But this was the only divorce from the traditional poetry in al-Māzini's experiment. His diction, his phraseology, his general poetic structure, still carried the mark of strength and traditional resonance of the neo-Classical poetry with none of Shukri's faltering phraseology and hesitant expressions. There is no attempt in al-Māzini to bring about a change in the language. His possession of the poetic language rested on firm Classical basis and was not

shaken even by his direct appropriation of some English poems with their new themes.[47]

But despite his distinct Romantic trend, al-Māzini was unable to lead the Romantic trend in Arabic poetry. This may be due to the fact that his poetry, while not showing any of the weaknesses of Shukri's verse, was not of a sufficiently high standard nor of a sufficient abundance to emphasise his special quality on Arabic poetry.

The enthusiasm manifested in al-Māzini's early writings on poetry seems to have been inspired by outside factors rather than by a permanent drive.[48] Criticism with al-Māzini was a whimsical attraction, the result of an impressionistic fascination with the world of ideas and theories. He admitted as to this later on.[49] In fact his career, perhaps more than that of any other man of letters of his generation, is a proof of the influence of imported Western theories at that time on talent in the making. There was an urgent need for a new kind of theory and for forging links with foreign and more progressive fields. Al-Māzini was certainly a talented man, but he fell early under the influence of Shukri who was predominantly a poet. He took to poetry like him, but his true talent did not discover its real channels early in life. The best humorous writer in modern Arabic literature, he lost many years of his career catering to a field (poetry and poetic criticism) which was not genuinely his own.[50] *

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* This was perhaps prompted by several factors. Firstly because poetry was still the noblest and most familiar literary field of the Arabs. To be a poet was the highest literary achievement - an achievement sought even by some of the best established prose writers of the nineteenth century (Adīb Ishāq, ʿAbdullah al-Nadīm, etc., not to mention earlier nineteenth century writers such as al-Yāziji and al-Shidyāq) as well as by early twentieth century writers (the most prominent of whom was perhaps al-Manfalūti). Secondly al-Māzini's special gift as a humorous prose writer might have found it difficult to evolve at such an early date because of the lack of good examples of humerous prose in modern Arabic on which it could base itself. Only an inner growth and a literary maturity as well as years of practice as a prose writer could have brought on that special style which made al-Māzini so popular in his later career.

His final change of tone from the emotional and erratic to the sarcastically humerous is a great manifestation of a literary talent finally finding itself out of the labyrinth of imported ideas and methods.[51]

Al-'Aqqād's career as a poet and a critic of poetry was the most constant of the three. A self-appointed guardian of the literary citadel, he kept loyal to the task throughout his long and fruitful life. Like al-Māzini, he tackled criticism both on the theoretical and the applied sides and beat the drum for modernism, truth, greater depth and a portrayal of the poet's self. Bent, not only on bringing about a revolution in the concept of poetry, but also on establishing himself as the leading poet in Egypt who could give the new poetry its best and freshest examples, he worked on three fields. The first, which was the most beneficial to poetry, was his writings on the poetic theory. The second was his applied criticism, which was violent, bitter and indiscriminating. It had therefore a double effect; for while it helped greatly to destroy the trenches of the neo-Classical school and was one of the foundations on which later criticism against traditionalism based itself, it could not set the proper example for objective, level-headed criticism. The third was the example he gave in his own poetry of the theories he advocated. This was a drastic attempt. For his clear, modern and rich theories, his consciousness of the role he wished to play and his insistence on his own value as a poet could not help a poetry that was devoid of the basic elements of art. Yet he was able to create, in the minds of a generation thirsty for change and modernisation but hazy in vision and perception, a mental impression of his importance as a poet. This he might have achieved because of the abundance of his poetic output on the one hand, and the strong, decisive and knowledgeable critical writings on the other. But the result was that a good number of critics and writers on poetry in Egypt accepted his poetry (and the poetry of al-Māzini and Shukri with him) as a synonym of what modernized poetry should be in Arabic. This caused a definite lowering of the standards of aesthetic appreciation.

This point deserves discussion here because it was a serious relapse in the development of poetry in Egypt, and the development of aesthetic taste there. A strange confusion resulted in the field of applied criticism for modern poetic works in Arabic which has not yet been cleared away. Even Ṭāhā Ḥusain participated in it, as we have seen. The whole Arab world was influenced to some degree by the trend, although more sober and selective critics were trying constantly to overcome it. Mārūn ʿAbbūd, the most original modern critic in Lebanon reacted to al-ʿAqqād's poetry with sarcasm. He took hold of several of al-ʿAqqād's anthologies (Hadiyyat al-Karawān, ʿĀbir Sabīl, and Wahy al-Arbaʿīn) and showed their "inferiority", giving examples that could leave no doubt as to the poor quality of their poetry.[52] "This poetry is dry like wood",[53] he exclaimed. "It is hoarse and prosaic ... and lacks the moving power /of poetry/."[54] He remarked on the curious discrepancy between al-ʿAqqād's theorizations on "true poetry" and the examples he created to demonstrate them. "Al-ʿAqqād is like an eloquent priest who knows the Bible and all the Holy Books and perfects the art of preaching ... but is hindered by his instincts from behaving according to what he teaches ..."[55] There is no clemency from ʿAbbūd on al-ʿAqqād. "I read the introductions to his anthologies and exclaim 'God bless', I must be confronting a poet who is unrivalled, but as soon as I cross the threshhold, I find poor poetry and imagine myself reading the exercise books of practicing /students/ in intermediate classes."[56]

However, al-ʿAqqād continued to find support over the years from Egyptian writers. Yet, it must be observed, his poetry was never able to take any hold on the spirit of the majority of readers either in Egypt or outside Egypt. With the years, despite his continuous efforts at poetry writing which resulted in the appearance of several anthologies, his fame as a thinker and prose-writer superseded his fame as a poet. In fact al-ʿAqqād has hardly been remembered as a poet in the last decades by most readers and students of poetry.[57] There is no scope in this work to

discuss al-'Aqqād's place as a man of letters[58], as the writer of the famous biographies, of the novel Sārah, of the numerous articles on general culture, or of his contemplative, always argumentative writings on philosophic themes.[59] It is only with his place as poet and writer on poetry that this work is concerned.

Among the writers on poetry in Egypt who realised the poor quality of al-'Aqqād's poetry was, as one would expect, Mandūr.[60] He spoke in several places about the dry, intellectual nature of al-'Aqqād's poetry,[61] its prosaic structure,[62] its didactic spirit,[63] the tepidity of its emotions[64] and the banality of its vision.[65] He insisted that al-'Aqqād's poetic nature was naive and direct, very different from the complex material of his intellectual writings.[66]

Two diwans of al-'Aqqād's should be mentioned here as an example of the experiments that were being made in poetry in the fourth decade. These are Hadiyyat al-Karawān (1933) and 'Ābir Sabīl (1937). The first takes its particularity from the fact that the whole diwan revolves around one single theme: the karawān (curlew). Al-'Aqqād, in his introduction to this diwan, wonders at the fact that one does not find any mention of this bird in the poetry of the Egyptian poets, despite the fact that the karawān is heard a great deal in the Egyptian sky. All that they mention in their poetry, he says, is the sparrow and such like birds although they are not heard nearly so often.

But the poetry in this diwan, like the rest of al-'Aqqād's, is annihilated by the intellect and its affected creations. In fact, this diwan suffered one of the strongest bouts of ridicule from 'Abbūd.[67]

'Ābir Sabīl (The Wayfarer) is based on another theory. In its introduction al-'Aqqād declares that "all that we clothe with our feelings and engulf in our imagination and penetrate with our consciousness and imbue with our worries, dreams and fears is poetry and a subject for poetry, because it is life and a subject of life".[68] "The wayfarer therefore sees

poetry, if he wishes, everywhere ... he sees it in the house he lives in and in the street he walks every day, in the shop windows, in the car ... because all these are linked with daily life and everything which is linked with human life is entangled in our feelings and therefore fit to be expressed [in poetry]."[69]

The abortive attempt of al-'Aqqād in 'Ābir Sabīl to picture scenes and little experiences from daily life, however, found a favourable echo in Egypt.[70] This shows, perhaps more than any other critical reaction, how aesthetic standards had already been levelled down among some well-known writers on poetry in Egypt. To give a single example, Ḍaif, in order to illustrate what he described to be al-'Aqqād's "magnificent gift ... of changing into poetry ordinary things and surrounding them with a halo of art and dreams",[71] gives the example of his poem "The Shop Goods on a Feast Day" "سلع الدكاكين في يوم العطالة" In this poem al-'Aqqād describes a on a feast day. They yearn for freedom, they are frantic lest they get worn out from stagnation, they cry for help! The banality, the ridiculously prosaic expressions and the great absurdity of meaning never strike Ḍaif as examples of extremely bad poetry. He is not aware of the fact that experience in poetry must spring from the human condition and not from an

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* An extract from the poem can easily show its absurdity and its poor quality:

72 مقفـــرات مغلقـــات محكمـــات كل ابواب الدكاكين على كلا الجهـــات
تركوهـــا اهملوهـــا
يـــوم عيـــد عيـــدوه ومضوا في الخلـــــــــــــوات
البـــدار مالنا اليوم قـرار
اى صوت ذاك يـدعو الناس من خلـــف الجـــدار ؟
ادركوهـــا اطلقوهـــا
ذاك صوت السلـــع المحبـوس في الظلمـــة ثـــار

imaginary situation of inanimate objects. He accepts it, even years after its publication, as a great and original experiment aimed at modernising Arabic poetry. This is a strange and unhappy situation for a widely read writer on poetry like Ḍaif. Years ago, Mārūn ʿAbbūd raised havoc in Lebanon about this poem. "Is there no one... in Egypt to advise this man? /al-ʿAqqād/" he exclaimed in no uncertain terms.[73]

It deserves mention here that Mandūr shows the greatest concern about Arabic poetry with regard to the influence of ʿĀbir Sabīl on it. He says, "We fear that the example of ʿĀbir Sabīl might draw Arabic poetry to the pit which it had reached before al-Bārūdi, when it was bent on dealing with petty subjects."[74] Mandūr's fears, however, are completely without foundation, for he was writing in the fifties after Arabic poetry had paved its way successfully towards the deeper and more vital issues of the human condition.

Mandūr believes that al-ʿAqqād was imitating Ibn al-Rūmi in his description of simple things from daily life, especially so because Ibn al-Rūmi "was one of his favourite poets whom he ... studied and analysed".[75] However, it is more likely that he was influenced by Hazlitt's ideas on the subject. The similarity between the ideas he expounds in the introduction to ʿĀbir Sabīl, (some of which are quoted above), and the ideas expressed by Hazlitt, his favourite English critic,[76] on the subject, is striking. Hazlitt says, "... There is no thought or feeling that can have entered into the mind of man, which he would be eager to communicate to others, or which they would listen to with delight, that is not a fair subject of poetry. It is not a branch of authorship: it is 'the stuff of which our life is made'."[77]

With regard to al-ʿAqqād's experiments in poetry one can conclude that he was, in his early career, greatly fascinated with theory and novelty. His poetry was no real match to his well-guided insistence on destroying the trenches of fossilized poetic conceptions

and doing away with the artificiality and the pompousness of the neo-Classicists. Although his poetry never gained a true audience, it often gained, and still does, a good amount of praise by Egyptian writers.[78]

But as a critic of poetry al-'Aqqād's place was outstanding. His criticism, however, despite the fact that it achieved ultimate results, had several factors which hampered its immediate effectiveness. In the first place he was too bitter and violent[79] in his applied criticism to be immediately convincing. Thus he, like al-Māzini, could not help to lay a good basis for objectivity in literary criticism. In the second place his choice of target did not reveal a basic good judgment of genius. For as has been mentioned he launched his attacks mainly on Shauqi, then at the height of his poetic achievement, stripping him absolutely of all merit.[80] His argument against Shauqi's alleged weaknesses was often unconvincing and carried sometimes the marks of willful prejudice. He never saw Shauqi's situation as a poet and never sensed the forces of circumstances and the particular role poetry had to play before it could undergo with safety the changes he advocated.[81] In his enthusiasm for the achievement of modernity in poetry he overstepped the boundaries of what was possible in that particular time and place. In the third place, even aside from his lack of sound judgment, it was too difficult for the poetic situation in Egypt at the time to absorb his radical views. Although these views were perhaps the strongest and most effective stand which the avant-garde movement could adopt in order to achieve any results against an entrenched Classicism, the Classical conception of poetry, strongly confirmed by eminent examples of contemporary poetic contribution, was too deep-rooted to undergo immediately any important change. In fact al-'Aqqād in his critical theories tried to enter the world of modern poetry before it was possible for the Egyptian soil to allow it to grow.

In the fourth place al-'Aqqād showed signs of self-contradiction and a discrepancy between theory and application that at times arouses

astonishment.[82] However, this might have been nearly inevitable in the circumstances. For this is the era not only of the prevalence of theory over genuine poetic contribution but also of the prevalence of theorisation over practical applied criticism[83] and real aesthetic appreciation of modern poets. Most of the Egyptian critics of the second, third and even fourth decades were at their best when dealing with Classical poets. When dealing with contemporaries they were often at a loss. Either through unmerited praise or through violent ridicule, they brought forward and confirmed a standard of poetic evaluation rather out of touch with real aesthetic principles, as we have seen with Ṭāhā Ḥusain's attitude towards some contemporary poets.

It is important to see in al-'Aqqād not only the pioneer in introducing a new and different conception of the art of poetry, but also the pioneer in trying to clear the way for these conceptions by destroying the Classical citadel. It is also important to see, clearly and with certainty, the strength and depth of the roots of Classicicism in the first few decades of this century. The conclusion would naturally be this: that if the power of neo-Classicism manifested itself in Shauqi's superior position as the first and leading poet, then the attack itself should be equal in strength to the poetry it set itself to defame.

A new creed demands many conditions to survive, but most of all it demands an undivided attention and loyalty on the part of its propagators, as well as an unrelenting denial of everything contrary to its teaching. Al-'Aqqād's obstinate stand against the neo-Classical school and his unfading enthusiasm to the new 'creed' in poetry shows the importance and vitality with which the new concepts of poetry were imbued and the drastic change they aimed at introducing.

Al-'Aqqād was aware of the violence of his stand against Shauqi. They were destroying the overwhelming illusions and involved intrigues,

he explained, and how needy they were for violence to prove their argument .[84] His criticism of Shauqi is regarded as the greatest achievement of his career as a critic.[85] He summarised what he regarded as defects in Shauqi's poetry into four main points: imitation, absurdity, disunity of the poem and concern with the outer description of things not with their essence.[86]

Al-'Aqqād insisted that Shauqi not only imitated the Classical poets but also borrowed their meanings directly. He gave several examples of what he saw as plagiarism in Shauqi, naming such poets as al-Ma'arri, al-Mutanabbi, al-Sharīf al-Raḍi, Muslim Ibn al-Walīd and others as targets for Shauqi's free borrowings.[82]

With imitation comes artificiality. Poetry, al-'Aqqād insisted, should be the result of a natural and spontaneous talent. Otherwise, it is sheer artifice.[88] Artifice is therefore not the outcome of an artistic talent but of intelligence.[89] In his opinion, Shauqi's poetry remarkably abounds in artifice and does not express the poet's own experience, taste or true emotions.[90]

Contemporary opinion in the Arab world can often be in favour of al-'Aqqād's views.[91] But poets like Shauqi, although highly traditional are not really imitative, in the sense that they do not copy the Classical poets to the loss of their own individuality and poetic personalities. Some of the Classical attitudes which persisted in their poetry were, not an object of direct and deliberate copying - the work of intelligence and observation as al-'Aqqād would have us believe - but a part of the poetic personalities of the poets in question. The framework of thought, the emotional setting of the Classical poetry was not altogether foreign to their own framework of thought and emotional attitudes. They had adopted them long ago, in a most spontaneous fashion, and included them naturally in their own poetic equipment. The Classical poetry, moreover, was the only poetic tradition which they could follow. They borrowed their

poetic strength from it, and this was, instinctively, the only thing to do at the time. Shukri, in the second decade of this century, failed as a poet when he laid himself open to the influence of English poetry on him. His experimentation with the language of poetry as well as his experiments in blank verse failed drastically. We shall see how Abū Shādi, a younger contemporary of Shukri, will also fall under the same influence and experience the same failure.

The persistence of the traditional emotional set-up in that period (i.e. in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth) is an important characteristic and must be insisted upon if one is to understand the aesthetic development of the modern Arabs. The inherited emotional pattern was accentuated, in no small degree, by the Classical poetry itself which confirmed already existent attitudes and emotional reactions and illustrated them with ready-made verses from eminent Classical poets.

But another point, purely artistic, deserves discussion here. Shauqi's genius, although it had to limit itself, by force of time and poetic circumstance, to a traditional framework, was, nevertheless, creative within that framework itself. The question here is this: how can artistic genius sparkle with creativity within such a framework? The answer must be deduced from the fact that we know that it does happen, that some highly endowed poets have created within the traditional setting, poets like Shauqi, Muḥammad Mahdi al-Jawāhiri, Badawi al-Jabal and others. There is, aside from the compatibility of attitudes between these poets and the Classical emotional make-up, a sort of a spontaneously induced emotional state where the spirit of the Classical poetry dominates the creative faculty. They do not copy it deliberately, as minor poets do. They are genuinely imbued with it. The reaction of the modern Arab reader of more traditional education to Classical poetry confirms this idea. Very often he is a part of its emotional set-up and his appreciation of it is more

often the appreciation of the emotionally involved rather than of the aesthetically moved. It must be asserted here that the Classical poetry is still a part of the living modern culture of a great number of Arabs. Without such an understanding , the whole story of contemporary poetry in the Arab world, its struggle and development, cannot be made clear.

This does not mean that traditionalism in poetry, even at the hands of highly endowed poets ,should not have been attacked and rejected. But al-ʿAqqād's mistake lies in his bad choice of examples from Shauqi's poetry to illustrate his views. Speaking of absurdity of meaning in Shauqi's poetry he says that it is manifold. It involves unlimited exaggerations, untruths, contradictions in meanings, a lack of logic and other defects. But he was really unable to prove the absurdity of many of the verses he gave as examples. For a single example he gives this verse of Shauqi's as a sign of absurd meaning . This is from his elegy on Muṣṭafa Kāmil :

مصر الاسيفة،ريفها وصعيدها فبر أبرّعلى عظامك حاني

saying that this was meant to be a wonderful expression of wisdom whereas it is mere artistry.[92]

Al-ʿAqqād insisted, in many places in his writings, on the unity of the poem. In fact, he described the organic unity of the poem and he might be the first writer who wrote on this subject in modern Arabic with such clarity and insistence.[93] Mandūr, however, takes a firm stand on this and tries to disprove the importance of an organic unity in lyrical poetry. "It is wrong to ask the poet for such a kind of unity," he says, "the lyrical poem is built on scattered feelings and thoughts which can be arranged in many different ways."[94] He went on after that to show the lack of such unity in al-ʿAqqād's poetry.[95] Al-ʿAqqād's discussions of this topic were, however, to give fruit in later decades, and contemporary poets of the fifties regarded the organic unity of the poem a most important element in poetry as will be explained. Mandūr, however, was the first modern critic with a Western education who argued the matter and rejected

the blind acceptance of it as an infallible prerequisite of good poetry.

Al-'Aqqād urged the poets to go deeply into the essence of things and to reflect in poetry the "vastness of the universe and the profundity of life".[96] Poetry, moreover, must be authentic and reflect a poet's spontaneous reaction to things.[97] Shauqi was a master "craftsman" with no spontaneity or authenticity. This is a strong basis for a new poetry. But al-'Aqqād chose Shauqi as his target and could neither prove his superficiality through the examples he gave of his poetry nor could he apply the principles successfully to his own poetry. He also overlooked the fact that Shauqi expressed himself as did the normal Arab of his days, that he was a true measure of his generation's outlook and its general mood. It is true that the poet often precedes his age and that he can write a poetry so advanced that it is understood only by a few within his community. But such a role was denied to Shauqi's genius, because it would have conflicted immediately with the important role he was destined to play as the revivalist of modern Classicism. On the other hand, al-'Aqqād's insistence that the poet go inward into himself and there seek his inspiration, was not a broad call for Romanticism but a continuation of al-'Aqqād's unrelenting attack on the neo-Classical poetry with its apparent neglect to portray the poet's own experience and delineate a true picture of his private emotions or thoughts. His main objective was that the poet should portray his true attitude towards life and things and should come out with a philosophy of life as he himself saw it, not as a traditional stereotyped attitude.[98]

However, in al-'Aqqād's open invitation to go back to the self, he overlooks a most important point. It is the difficulty, the extreme difficulty for the poet of the time to arrive at real self-knowledge, to traverse the long and arid stretch of the public front* which poetry had known over many centuries. Even away from poetry, it was difficult for

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* 'Public' here is meant to denote 'not personal' and includes both court poetry and the poetry of the popular platform.

the culture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to free the individual from his own inner taboos and the imbued attitudes that expressed themselves in his spontaneous reactions to personal and social relations. One of the main struggles of modern Arabic poetry during the first half of the twentieth century was its struggle, conscious and unconscious, to pave its way towards emotional and spiritual veracity. If we go back to the nineteenth century we find that the issues aroused by al-Shidyāq's original and courageous outgoing into a much wider horizon were neither of a spiritual nor of an emotional nature. They were intellectual, carried on with vigour and intensity. But even these beautiful attributes of courage and individuality collapse on the threshhold of poetry which is mainly the expression of emotions and attitudes, and only banality is manifest. Al-Shidyāq stumbles and falls, writing in stereotyped fashion, in the old traditional way where stock emotions are called forth and let out in the poem. The same traditional way of feeling and emotional reaction is manifest, very clearly, in Rizq Allah Ḥassoun. This poet, who in one anthology put in verse a number of Biblical stories, and in another translated allegorical tales from Russian poetry, when he came to speak about personal matters in poetry, could not help but relapse to traditional ways of thinking and feelings. It has been discussed above how he eulogized and satirized , in the old traditional way, and wrote poems of longing and lamentations, always loyal to the poetic tradition.

Over and over again the Arab poet would find it extremely difficult first to go through emotional and spiritual experiences unique and individual in their nature, and then to express them in poetry. 'Ā'ishah al-Taimūriyyah (d.1902) could only manifest emotions and moods abundant in the poetic tradition, but there is a great probability that she did not actually experience such emotions. For there is nothing in her up-bringing, her education or her life[99] that could invite speculation or an outgoing of the self towards new areas of experience unknown in those times.[100]

From going over the development of poetry in the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth one can discern the slow arrival at self-discovery, the gradual growth of the individual's inner experience and his deepening vision. This is a very complicated process involving many aspects of growth, intellectual at first, then spiritual and emotional. The first outgoings of the Arab individual from a strict traditional way of life was accomplished by his discovery and rejection of the outer shackles (political and social) that hampered his growth as a member of society. And for the Arab literary artist this was his first rebellion, his first exclamation of distress, his first call to freedom. It was expressed in a multitude of examples, both in poetry and prose.[101] Needless to say poetry was public and an echo of the communal self. Numerous variations on the same theme were produced over the decades. Expressions and attitudes were repeated over and over again until they crystallized and were finally added to the hoard of stock words, phrases and emotions with which every language abounds. And later on, poetry, in its attempt to arrive at an expression of the inner life of the individual, of his private self, had to overcome, not only the traditional self but also the crystallized phrases and attitudes of a poetry long bent on the discussion of the outer shackles of life. This will be shown more clearly in the course of this work.

When al-ʿAqqād first attempted to pave the way of poetry towards a greater fusion with the inner self, he had not anticipated two things. The first was that the individual's discovery of a discrepancy between himself and traditions, between life as he knew was being lived in more progressive parts of the world and life in his own society,[102] was blunted to some extent by his own inner taboos and restrictions. The second was that poetry in Egypt in the first two or three decades was too steeped in tradition to be able to yield itself to a successful change in its emotional tones. The greatest proof of this argument is the poetry of the Dīwān

group themselves. For although it is true that they expressed personal feelings in their poetry, ... it remained considerably lacking in depth and emotional maturity. Al-Māzinī, in his rebellion against society, expressed with great intensity his angry feelings, but, confronting the great forces that hampered his inner growth, he wanted to die.[103] Shukri thought that the solution for the problem of poetry to endeavour towards the expression of the poet's inner feelings was to write love-poetry. The greatest bulk of his poetry was concentrated, therefore, on the theme of love. He did not realise that it was not only the subject matter that was at stake, but the inner attitude of the poet. There is indeed nothing in his poetry of the burning experience of a richer and deeper soul.

Al-'Aqqād himself was never able in his poetry to approach anywhere near his strong intellectual writings. As Mandūr said, his poetic nature remained naive and simple, despite its often intellectual context. But this is because in poetry it is not the intellectual context that determines the value of a poem, but the attitude and its depth and fertility.

However, al-'Aqqād's writings on poetry remain the most compact document we have on what was going on in poetry in the Egypt of the second, third and fourth decades. His series of articles entitled "Poetry in Egypt" can be regarded as the most useful and important writing on the condition of poetry in Egypt during the twenties. In these eight articles (he is writing in 1927) al-'Aqqād traverses the field of poetry in Egypt describing the harvest (poor and meagre),[104] the poetic concept (deficient and ignorant)[105] and the general attitude of a poetry trying to face, with limited tools and limited knowledge, the new conditions of life in a changing society.

His contemporaries, he said, had several misconceptions about modernism in poetry. The first of these was that they believed that modernity was achieved by the description "of modern inventions like steam, electricity, aeroplanes and other machines".[106] He ridiculed this, insisting that change in subject matter alone was no sign of modernity but

that it was the inner attitude of the poet and the way he described things that decided his modernity.[107] This is one of al-'Aqqād's best arguments, because it differentiated between subject matter and context in poetry. Thus poets like Ḥāfiẓ and 'Ali al-Jārim were not modern when they set forth to describe the aeroplane and the train. This he said, was merely a continuation of the old poetic tradition of describing the horse and the camel.[108]

Another false conception, he said, was the belief that the avoidance of exaggeration (a point upon which 'Aqqād had insisted in his criticism of Shauqi) was to follow with accurate precision the objective scientific truth. This, he rightly insisted, was ridiculous, for it made of "Ibn Mālik's "Alfiyyah" the best of all poetry, Classical and modern".[109] He advised the poets to exaggerate, but follow at the same time the artistic truth. This is one of the first clear calls for Arab poets to pave their way towards artistic veracity.[110]

In his sixth article he goes on to correct other misconceptions of the poetic art as understood by his contemporaries. Imagination in poetry, he insisted, was not a licence to untruths or to illogical conceptions.[111] Emotions are not the expressions of extreme tenderness and effeminate feelings, of tears, sighs, sorrows, lamentations and misery.[112] The language of poetry was not to be limited to certain words of 'poetic value' which are to be repeated by all the poets.[113] Nor should ideas in poetry be expressed in round-about ways which make their understanding a matter of great hardship.[114] They are, moreover, not to be expressed by means of affected similes and forcibly invented images.[115]

Another prevailing conception he spoke about was the idea that the poet had to be a moralist and to try to participate directly through his poetry in his people's progress. This conception was destined to stay on and to cause a great deal of controversy even up to the present time. In the twenties, however, this conception of the role of poetry was still

very naive, and was mixed with the conception of poetry as a record of public events which kept vigil on current affairs and participated in them through celebration or satire. Although this conception has not yet been eradicated completely from contemporary Arabic poetry in both practice and theory, as we shall see later, the differentiation between engaged poetry in a deeper (often Sartrian) meaning and the old concept of poetry as a record of events is well recognised at the present time.

In two consecutive articles al-'Aqqād said that people believed that no poet could excel unless he commemorated in his poetry every political and social event of his days.[116] But, he said, 'poetry has a means to awaken people different to those of the politicians and social workers, for it can teach us the love of beauty and this in turn can teach us to rebel against oppression and tyranny because the soul that understands beauty rejects humiliation and tyranny.'[117] Further on he warned against seeking immediate benefits from art.[118]

Al'Aqqād's conception of innovation in poetry was summed up in the last article. Innovation, he insisted, does not lie in rejecting what was good in Classical Arabic poetry but in writing what the poet really feels in his heart. The poet must be the echo of his own age and therefore must not follow the footsteps of the Classicals and look around him with their eyes.[119]

This work does not aim at a full enumeration of al-'Aqqād's critical theory of poetry but rather at summing up its achievement and influence.[120] His theoretical writings seem, even now, fresh and original, despite his great leaning on Western concepts. The fact that he admitted, as early as 1913,[121] the strong links he and his two friends had established with Western writings on poetry did not diminish but rather enhanced his prestige. He wrote in a correct and powerful style. He was knowledgeable in Arabic literature and in Islamic studies. He spoke rather strongly of Egyptian future, progress and nationalism, and despite his great

dependence on Western thought did not seem in the least adulterated. All this stands to his credit. The fact that a great number of his contemporaries did not react favourably to him cannot subdue the fact that a great many did. Al-'Aqqād's service to Arabic poetic criticism and culture in general cannot be over-estimated. Throughout many decades of this century he continued to bring into sight and into focus, for Arab readers, all that he had read and studied and assimilated of Western culture, applying modern Western methods to poetic criticism of some of the Classical poets, as well as to his studies on the biographies of great men. He succeeded to a great extent in linking Arab with Western culture. In poetry he tried to clear the grove of the sham and the artificial. His bitter, insistent carping, despite what reserve one might have against it, was effective to a great degree, at the time, because it shook the deep-rooted conceptions which had confidently established themselves as definitions of poetry. Before him Muṭrān's mild voice had not been able to accomplish a real change in the poetic conception. Muṭrān's influence limited itself to poets and critics, but the bulk of the audience of poetry remained completely devoted to purely Classical values and concepts. Al-'Aqqād, with his insistent cries and bitter arguments, brought in clearer air. He related the art of criticism to living impressions, to the movement of life around him, to the essence of life itself. He tried to emancipate Arabic poetry from its bondage to sentimentality and ignorance, and helped a great deal to break up the critical tameness and rigidity of his time. In accomplishing this he followed the only method that could be effective at the time: direct unrelenting ridicule and attack on the trenches of the undesirable in poetry, carried on with point and vigour, but also with a strong background of knowledge and modern culture.

Al-'Aqqād never accepted modern poetry in the fifties and his continuous rejection and ridicule of the new movement in poetry and especially of modern free verse brought him disfavour with the young

generation of experimentalists. Most of these poets probably did not know that it was al-'Aqqād who had said in the third decade, "Our metres and rhymes are not sufficient for the poet whose horizon has widened and who has read Western poetry and seen how their [the Western poets'] metres can easily incorporate long narratives and diverse purposes and how the poetic structure yields to them so that they can use it for purposes for which no Arab poet can use anything but prose".[122] But this is a far away cry for the poets of the fifties among whom al-'Aqqād became especially notorious for his rejection of Muḥammad Fauzi al-'Antīl's poetic volume which had some free verse in it. This al-'Aqqād did in his capacity as a chairman for the poetry committee at the Higher Council for Arts, Literature and Social Sciences in Cairo. Al-'Aqqād enraged the whole generation of poets when he referred al-'Antīl's diwan to the prose committee.[123]

Footnotes

1. Najm, "Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah", p.321.
2. Ibid.
3. Al-ʿAqqād, Shuʿarāʾ Miṣr, p.192.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. See M.Z. Sallām, Al-Naqd al-ʿArabi ʾl-Muʿāṣir, Cairo, 1964, p.167.
7. Najm, op.cit., p.322.
8. See Niʿmāt Aḥmad Fuʾād, Adab al-Māzini, Cairo, 196 , p.138.
9. His diwans came out as follows:
   1. 1916 Yaqẓat al Ṣabāḥ. 2. 1917 Wahj al-Ẓahīrah.
   3. 1921 Ashbāḥ al-Aṣīl. 4. 1928 Aṣḥbāḥ al-Lail.
   However, this came out in 1928 as a part of a collection of all his diwans to date in a volume entitled Dīwān al-ʿAqqād.
   5. 1933 Waḥy al-Arbaʿīn. 6. 1933 Hadiyyat al-Karawān.
   7. 1937 ʿĀbir Sabīl. 8. 1942 Aʿāṣīr Maghrib.
   9. 1950 Baʿda ʾl-Aʿāṣīr. 10. 1958 Dīwān min al-Dawāwīn.
10. Najm, op.cit., p.321.
11. Both essays were later published in his book Muṭālaʿāt fi ʾl-Kutub wa ʾl-Hayāt, Cairo, 1924.
12. See also the essay written by Maḥmūd Amīn al-ʿĀlim, "Al-Shiʿr al-Miṣri ʾl-Ḥadīth", Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.16.
13. See M. Mandūr, Qaḍāyā Jadīdah fī Adabina ʾl-Ḥadīth, Beirut, 1958, pp.94-5.
14. M.A. al-ʿĀlim, loc.cit.
15. A. Dusūqi, Jamāʿat Apollo, p.65 and other writers.
16. The present writer is relying here on Mandūr's review of the book in Al-Shiʿr al-Miṣri, I, 67-71. The book itself is rare.
17. Ibid., p.67.
18. For more on this see al-ʿAqqād's introduction to al-Māzini's first diwan published in Muṭālaʿāt, pp.281-4. On the other hand Māhir Ḥasan Fahmi tends to believe that the gloomy atmosphere in the poetry of the group is directly the result of Western Romantic poetry. See his book Taṭawwur al-Shiʿr al-Ḥadīth fī Miṣr, Cairo, 1958, pp.181-2.
19. Al-ʿAqqād did write later poems of occasion. See his diwan Baʿda ʾl-Aʿāṣīr, Cairo, 1950, which is mostly made up of poems of occasion. See also his introduction, p.10, for his defence of this.
20. Najm, op.cit., p.326; Sallām, op.cit., p.169; al-ʿAqqād, "ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Shukri fi ʾl-Mīzān", Al-Hilāl, February, 1959, Vol.67, ii, 23-7; Mandūr, Al-Naqd, pp.52-3; see also pp.53 and 54 where Mandūr quoted al-Māzini in Al-Siyāsah newspaper of April 5, 1930, as admitting that Shukri had been his guide and teacher.
21. Najm, op.cit., p.324.
22. Dīwān Shukri, p.[illegible]

23. Ibid., p.360.

24. See al-Māzini's comment below, footnote 49.

25. Dīwān Shukri, p.287.

26. Ibid.

27. See his idea on this, ibid., p.209, in which he says that "poetry is what makes you feel the emotions...intensely".

28. As for example in his poem on hell entitled "Ḥulm al-Ba'th", ibid., pp.239-240.

29. See Mandūr's writings on Shukri, Al-Shi'r, I, 72-9 and 83-7.

30. Dīwān Shukri, p.129.

31. Ibid., p.32.

32. For a criticism of Shukri's poetic weakness see Mandūr, Al-Shi'r, I, 83-7.

33. Dīwān Shukri, pp.86-94, a poem entitled "Kalimātu 'l-'Awāṭif".

34. See his poems "Al-Jannatu 'l-Kharāb", ibid., p.200; "'Itāb al-Malik Ḥujr li Ibnihī Umru'u 'l-Qais", ibid., pp.201-2; "Wāqi'at Abī Qīr", pp.203-4; "Napoleon wa 'l-Sāḥir al-Miṣri", pp.205-6, the last being a narrative poem.

35. Maḥmūd Amīn al-'Ālim, loc.cit.

36. Dīwān Shukri, p.363.

37. Ibid., pp.261-2.

38. Ibid., p.360.

39. As quoted by Sallām, op.cit., p.181.

40. See Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, Al-Mathal al-Sā'ir, Cairo, 1939, I, 168. See also his chapter on words, pp.142-192, especially pp. 168, 177, 173 & 179. See also Sallām, op.cit., p.188.

41. Ibid., p.185.

42. Ibid., p.186; Mandūr, Al-Naqd, pp.162-3.

43. Quoted by Sallām, op.cit., p.186.

44. I.A. Al-Māzini, Ḥasād al-Hashīm, third edition, Cairo, 1948, pp.314 and 315.

45. From quotations of al-Māzini by Mandūr, in Al-Naqd, pp.166-7.

46. See A. Dusūqi, op.cit., p.113, for his comment on the destructive quality of the Dīwān group's criticism of some of their own contemporaries.

47. See al-'Aqqād, Ba'da 'l-A'āṣīr, pp.154 and 155 where he praises al-Māzini's ability to translate both prose and poetry into pure Classical Arabic.

48. For more on al-Māzini's criticism see Mandūr, Al-Naqd, pp.157-195 and Sallām, op.cit., pp.181-218.

49. In an article entitled "Fi 'l-Adab wa Ghairihi", published in Al-Risālah, No.235, January, 1938, p.3, he mentions that when he was questioned once about the purpose of literature, he answered, "I know no purpose for it... but I admit that I had, many years ago, convinced myself that it had one. What confirmed this fancy in me was what I had read about the matter. I then began to write in the same fashion and say similar things."

50. Al-ʿAqqād, speaking on him in a memorial ceremony held on Sept. 19th, 1949, mentions that poetry was a passing whim in al-Māzini's life and that he himself used to mock his own poetry. The speech was published later in al-ʿAqqād's diwan Baʿd al-Aʿāṣīr. Reference here is to p.152. On a comparison between the two phases of al-Māzini's career see also Gibb, "Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature, III, Egyptian Modernists", B.S.O.A.S., 1928-1930, V, iii, 463. See also ʿAbbūd, Judud wa Qudamāʾ, p.241. ʿAbbūd, whose integrity as a critic is beyond doubt, had no real prejudice against Egyptian literature, for he appreciated al-Māzini greatly and admired his character and humorous writings, see ibid., pp.243-5.

51. Writers on al-Māzini give different explanations for his change. Al-ʿAqqād refers his change to the misery felt by al-Māzini (a misery shared also by his educated contemporaries) during the first world war; Baʿd al-Aʿāṣīr, p.145. Here again the cause of literary development and change is referred to the social and political happenings and no artistic cause is given. Niʿmāt Aḥmad Fuʾād, refers the change that took place in al-Māzini to his wish to "assess life and not merely to picture it"; Adab al-Māzini, p.154.

52. See his four chapters on ʿAqqād's diwans Waḥy al-Arbaʿīn, Hadiyyat al-Karawān, and ʿAbir Sabīl in ʿAla 'l-Miḥakk, pp.226-279.

53. Ibid., p.230.

54. Ibid., p.233.

55. Ibid., p.229.

56. Ibid., see also Mujaddidūn, pp.43 & 44-5, for further criticism.

57. It is interesting to note that Rajāʾ al-Naqqāsh, a modern Egyptian writer, in his assessment of al-ʿAqqād's place in Arabic literature and thought never mentions his poetry, see his article written at the death of al-ʿAqqād, "Al-ʿAqqād", Al-Ādāb, April, 1964, pp.6-7. On al-ʿAqqād's lesser fame as a poet see also Aḥmad al-Jundi, "Al-ʿAqqād al-Shāʿir", Al-Maʿrifah magazine, Damascus, July, 1964, pp.64 & 65; see also A. Ghallāb, "Al-ʿAqqād ... Shāʿiran", Al-Ādāb, July, 1964, p.14 where he asserts the fact that al-ʿAqqād is hardly remembered as a poet.

58. For a comprehensive evaluation of al-ʿAqqād as a man of letters see I. Kīlāni, "Al-ʿAqqād al-Adīb", Al-Maʿrifah, August, 1964, pp.66-74.

59. On al-ʿAqqād as a thinker see Jamīl Ṣalība's excellent essay, "Al-ʿAqqād al-Mufakkir", Al-Maʿrifah, July, 1964, pp.56-62.

60. Early in his career Mandūr recognised al-ʿAqqād's shortcomings as a poet; see his criticism of some of his poetry in Mīzān, pp.106-8.

61. Al-Shiʿr, I, 46, 52, 59, 72 & 74; see also A. Dusūqi, Jamāʿat Apollo, p.107; Aḥmad al-Jundi, "Al-ʿAqqād al-Shāʿir", p.65; Rashād ʿAli Dīb, "Maʿ al-ʿAqqād al-Shāʿir", Al-Maʿrifah, November, 1964, pp.86, 87 & 88.

62. Mandūr, Al-Shiʿr, I, 46, 60, et passim.

63. Ibid., pp.46, 54, et passim.

64. Mīzān, p.108.

65. Al-Shiʿr, I, 61, et passim.

66. Ibid., p.61.

67. Aside from his above-mentioned criticism of this diwan in 'Ala 'l-Miḥakk, see Mujaddidūn, for his ridicule of al-'Aqqād's poem "al-Bilā" on p.139 of Hadiyyatu 'l-Karawān, as quoted by 'Abbūd on p.43. 'Abbūd rightly quotes the following verse from the poem as an example of absurdity: البيلا البيلا البيـــلا ما احلى سلب البيلا

where 'bīlā' is meant to be 'bīrā' and 'sulb' is meant to be 'shurb'. Al-'Aqqādis imitating the lisping of a young woman.

68. 'Ābir Sabīl, Cairo, 1937, p.4.

69. Ibid., p.5.

70. See J. Ramādi, A'lām, p.233, where he says that 'Ābir Sabīl was "a turning point in the history of Arabic poetry". See also S. Ḍaif, Dirāsāt, pp.85-103.

71. Ibid., p.100. In fact Ḍaif shows a lower standard of aesthetic appreciation in this book than one would expect. Muḥammad al-Nuwaihi thinks that Ḍaif has failed as a critic because he does not know any Western literature; see Thaqāfat al-Nāqid al-Adabi, Cairo, 1949, p.49.

72. 'Ābir Sabīl, p.47.

73. 'Alā 'l-Miḥakk, p.269.

74. Al-Shi'r al-Misri, II, 55.

75. Ibid., p.52.

76. See al-'Aqqād, Shu'arā' Misr, p.192.

77. From his essay "On Poetry in General" in Selected Essays, Glasgow, 1946, p.387.

78. See for example Zaki Najīb Maḥmūd's two chapters on al-'Aqqād as a poet, "Al-'Aqqād al-Shā'ir", Falsafah wa Fann, pp.300-14, and "Kaifa Tarjama 'l-'Aqqād li 'l-Shaiṭān", ibid., pp.315-29; S. Mūsā, Al-Hilāl, Vol.32, iii, December 1923, p.295; Ḍaif, Al-Adab al-'Arabi, p.127; Ramādi, A'lām, pp.70-117, especially p.73.

79. Many writers have commented on al-'Aqqād's violent, bitter approach; see Ghāli Shukri, "Ma'ālim al-Thaurah al-Ūlā 'Ind al-'Aqqād", Dirāsāt 'Arabiyyah, Beirut, No.2, December, 1966, p.65; Sallām, op.cit., p.237; Ḍaif, Shauqi, p.114.

80. See his two chapters on him entitled "Shauqi fi 'l-Mīzān", Al-Dīwān, I, 3-45, and II, 33-78; see also Sā'āt, pp.112-4; Shu'arā' Misr, pp.155-68.

81. See Ghāli Shukri, "Qambīz min al-Tārīkh ila 'l-Shi'r", Dirāsāt 'Arabiyyah, Beirut, No.5, March, 1967, p.49.

82. For his self-contradictions compare his ideas about innovations in metres in Majallat al-Majma' al-'Ilmi al-'Arabi, April, 1960, Vol.32, ii, 202 n, with his ideas about the same subject made earlier in his career, e.g. in his introduction to al-Māzini's diwan published in Mutāla'āt, pp.279-81; see also Ashtāt Mujtami'āt, Cairo, 1963, pp. 104-121. See also Mandūr, Al-Naqd, for more on al-'Aqqād's contradictions, pp.131-5.

83. See Cachia, op.cit., p.229, for his assertion that critical theories in the early decades of this century prevailed over practice.

84. Sā'āt, p.140.

85. Sallām, op.cit., p.235.

86. For a more detailed discussion of this see ibid., p.237; Mandūr, Al-Naqd, pp.110-22.

87. For more of al-ʿAqqād's ideas on poetry of imitation see Muṭālaʿāt, pp.274-79.

88. See al-ʿAqqād's first three articles on Shauqi entitled "Aḥmad Shauqi", in Shuʿarāʾ Miṣr, pp.156-82.

89. See his introduction to his first diwan in Dīwān al-ʿAqqād, Cairo, 1928, p.8.

90. Shuʿarāʾ Miṣr, p.173 et passim.

91. See Ghāli Shukri, op.cit., Dirāsāt ʿArabiyyah, December, 1966, pp. 83-5.

92. See A.H. Diyāb, ʿAbbās al-ʿAqqād Nāqidan, Cairo, 1965, p.423 where he quotes it from Al-Dīwān, /II/, 94 & 95, and comments on it.

93. Other than his writings in Al-Dīwān I & II, see also Sāʿāt, p.346; see also Diyāb's interesting chapter on the history of the idea of unity in the poem and al-ʿAqqād's interpretation of it, op.cit., pp.405-28.

94. Al-Naqd, p.113.

95. Ibid., pp.115-8.

96. Sāʿāt, pp.114 & 115; and other books by him.

97. See his chapter "Al-Ṣaḥīḥ wa 'l-Zāʾif min al-Shiʿr", ibid., pp.73-8 on the subject; also Muṭālaʿāt, pp.274-5, et passim.

98. Shuʿarāʾ Miṣr, pp.160-161 and other books by him.

99. For an account of her life see al-ʿAqqād, Shuʿarāʾ Miṣr, pp.150-4; see also Bint al-Shāṭiʾ, Al-Shāʿirah al-ʿArabiyyah al-Muʿaṣirah, pp.20-2.

100. Al-ʿAqqād falls into another one of his antithetical discussions when he decides that her poetry lacked in the expression of true emotion because she was a woman. Women poets, in his opinion, were passive by the very fact of womanhood, and could only excel in the poetry of sorrows and lamentations. Shuʿarāʾ Miṣr, pp.151-2. But, if this is so, why did al-ʿAqqād accuse all the poets of his time of self-effacement and lack of authenticity? In fact, all the poets including women poets at the time suffered from the same traditional closing up of the personality to true emotional adventure. Bint al-Shāṭiʾ has a different theory. She is greatly pre-occupied with the problem of emotional suppression in Arab women and makes it a persistent generalization in her evaluation of the literary works written by Arab women authors. To her, Āʾishah al-Taimūriyyah's love poetry is authentic. She might not have had a particular man in mind, but she was expressing the long suppressed longing of Arab women for love, op.cit., p.34; see also, pp.23-35, for a long, if rather unsubstantiated, argument on the subject.

101. For a full account of social and political influences on modern Arabic literature see the books of A.K. al-Maqdisi, Ittijāhāt, and ʿUmar al-Daqqāqʿ, Al-Ittijāh al-Qaumi.

102. See al-ʿAqqād's introduction to al-Māzini's first diwan, op.cit.

103. See his poems "Fatan fī Siyāq al-Maut", Dīwān al-Māzini, Cairo, /1913/, I, 13-5; and "Aḥlām al-Mautā", ibid., pp.23-5.

104. Sāʿāt, pp.106, 107, 114 & 115.

105. Ibid., pp.106, 108, 116 and 119.

106. Ibid., pp.122 and 141.

107. Ibid., p.117, 122, 142. See also Mandūr, Al-Naqd, pp.139-140.

108. Sā'āt, p.142.

109. Ibid., p.122.

110. Ibid., pp.122-3; see also Mutāla'āt, pp.290 and 296.

111. Sā'āt, p.129.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid., pp.129-130.

114. Ibid., p.130.

115. Ibid.

116. Ibid., pp.125 and 141; see also Al-Fusūl, p.119.

117. Sā'āt, p.126.

118. Ibid., pp.125-6.

119. Ibid., pp.141-2.

120. For a more detailed definition of poetry in al-'Aqqād's opinion, see Mutāla'āt, pp.290-6; see also Mandūr, op.cit., p.130, and after; Sallām, op.cit., pp.218-230.

121. See Mutāla'āt, pp.278 and 299, passages in his introductions to the diwans of al-Māzini and Shukri.

122. Mutāla'āt, p.279.

123. On this event see Mandūr, Qadāyā Jadīdah, pp.88-91.

SECTION 2: IRAQ

How far the Egyptian experiment affected the poetic output in other Arab countries at the time, it is very difficult to assess. The fact that Egypt has been for some time now the centre of Arabic culture has been emphasised in the course of this work. However, this should not lead to the conclusion that all ideas on poetic innovation stemmed from Cairo, or that all experiments in poetry were first attempted there. One of the most outstanding features of the poetic development at this time was the simultaneous awakening to the need for change in all those Arab countries where an active poetic tradition has been sustained over the decades, such as Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. Side by side with conservative elements, an authentic change of poetic sensibility was taking place.

To find a general description that would fit Arabic poetry as a whole at this time, one may say that it records all aspects of the development of the Arab nation and reflects the gradual growth towards sophistication in life and in art. Yet despite this steady growth towards intellectual, emotional and aesthetic maturity, the story of Arabic poetry as told by many literary historians often neglects the interaction between these factors of the creative faculty and is often tragically marred by the unbalanced stress laid upon 'theme' alone in poetry. For although theme in poetry was the first and definitely the most concrete element that underwent a drastic change at the beginning of the century, slow and inevitable changes were steadily taking place in many of the other poetic elements. These were sometimes apparent, as in the attempts poets made to vary metre, rhyme and poetic diction, and sometimes subtle, as in the gradual change of tone, attitude, emotion and depth. It would be beyond the scope of this work to go into a detailed discussion of the gradual changes that were bound to take place in all these elements, but an attempt at a clear, concise

and critical review of them will be made, which aspires to lay the basis for a more detailed study in the future.

One field of poetry which must never be overlooked at any stage by the writer on modern Arabic poetry is Iraq. In this country an artistic growth of vast dimensions was subtly taking place during the first decades of this century and, with the support of an authentic and strongly entrenched poetic tradition, it brought, in the late forties, the most important and drastic revolution in the history of Arabic poetry. Right from the opening years of this century the basis was being laid for this revolution, the most important factor of which was perhaps the open and generous attitude Iraqi poets and readers adopted towards Arab (and later towards foreign) creative talent everywhere.

Obviously it is impossible to discuss in detail all the Iraqi poets who were writing during the first four decades of this century. However among them, six or seven poets stand out as being most remarkable, and many of them were instrumental in the development of the poetry of this period as well as being representative of the various lines of development in Iraqi poetry during that time. Being the heirs to a strongly rooted poetic and linguistic tradition, each one reacted to the currents of intellectual, spiritual and political revival of the early decades of this century in his own individual fashion. Although one major element pervades their poetry, namely the pre-occupation, to a varying degree, with the national scene both political and social, the depth and quality of the innovations they achieved varied considerably. The study of this period in Iraqi poetry should be of particular interest to the student of Arabic literature, not only because it displays the varied reactions of these different poets, but also because it brings out the individuality and special qualities of some of them. The avant-garde poets of the fifties and sixties, who are in the habit of dismissing lightly all the poetry of the period as conventional rumination, ought to hesitate long before giving their hasty judgments and try to study

the poetry of this period as a poetry of endeavour and sometimes even of adventure. The interaction between the poetical and social convention on the one hand, and the new outlook on the other is charmingly and sometimes pathetically manifest in this poetry. The cross-section reveals many experiments varying in degree from the faint endeavour of al-Kāẓimi to the original and isolated endeavour of al-Ṣāfi.

1 : CONSERVATISM

(i) Al-Kāẓimi

ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Kāẓimi (1870-1935) was the first self-exiled Iraqi poet in this century.* One of the earliest champions of freedom in Iraq, he was led by indignant pride together with his fear of the Ottoman authorities to take refuge outside Iraq, finally settling in Egypt in 1899,[1] where he remained until his death. With him he carried his deeply rooted Shīʿah education, mixed with a good share of Bedouin culture and a vast knowledge of Classical poetry.[2] Neither the urbanised surroundings of Cairo nor the battle of ideas that was raging in Egypt during the second and third decades seem to have influenced him, for this dignified and serene poet showed no traces of being aware of the vast theorisations on poetry that were taking place around him. A crude tendency to innovation and modernisation showed itself in some of his poems as, for instance, the poem in which he describes the train using imagery such as the old Arab

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* A mild tradition of self-exile was already established in Iraqi poetry, for aside from the actual emigration of ʿAbd al-Ghani Jamīl in the 19th century, in protest against the authorities, his poetry and that of others yearned for leaving the place where man's dignity was not honoured.[3]

poet used for his own means of transportation.[4] This seems rather strange because he was well acquainted with al-ʿAqqād, who led the battle against conventionalism, as well as with others supporting the same ideal.[5] A poet with a great ability to extemporize,[6] he was able to draw continuously on a treasure of Classical verse, very traditional in its diction, phraseology, and imagery, but strongly woven, with a Classical purity unrivalled in his time even by the great Shauqi himself. In this poetry we see how the Iraqi poet, well versed in the strong Shi'ah poetical and linguistic tradition, freed himself by the end of the nineteenth century from embellishments and ornamental language and sought his models in purer Classical patterns, like the poems of al-Sharīf al-Raḍi,[7] a Fatimid poet commanding great respect among the Shī'ah lovers of poetry. A simplicity and directness, a serenity of structure and even balance are marred in al-Kāẓimi by the lingering traditional images of the "Bedouin poetry".[8] These verses could be enjoyed much more if one thought they belonged to a Classical poet:

ما سلونا آرام نجد ولكن شغلتنا الصلى عن الآرام[9]
وبنفسي تلك الخيام ومن حل من الغيد بين تلك الخيام
كل حلو الدلال ابلج كالصبح رقيق الصبا رشيق القوام
لو كذاك الاصنام في الحسن تبرى جاز عندى عبادة الاصنام

Not one word here is out of place. This well-woven phraseology and the harmony of words and rhythm are a constant quality of his poetry except when he chooses a difficult rhyme.[10] This is a quality that was not attained by his two more famous contemporaries, al-Zahāwi and al-Raṣāfi, who did not have the strong conscious Shī'ah education which al-Kāẓimi had had as a young man.[11]

The Bedouin spirit and characteristics were a strong traditional trait in Iraqi poetry in the 19th century especially in poets like Ibrāhīm al-Ṭabāṭabā'i, al-Kāẓimi's teacher,[12] and Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Ḥabbūbi.[13] They

are also apparent in al-Kāẓimi. In the extract quoted above the spirit of the Bedouin rover who has departed from his beloved spot, the mention by the Iraqi expatriate poet of Najd, and of the tents, the description of the beautiful maidens whose whiteness resembles the morning are all reminiscent of the ancient desert poetry of nomad days. Images from an ancient heroic warring spirit appear in other poems, such as in this extract:

14

تلكم قبائلنا التي تسع الانام ضباتها
ان تدعهم لملمة لبت دعاك سراتها
وتسيل انفسهاعليك ولم تسل عبراتها
.....
لا تغمد الاسياف ان حرب علت قبساتها
حتى تظل بالجماجم والرقاب شباتها
فصفاحهم ابدا تصافح في الظلى صفحاتها
ورماحهم ابدا تعانق في الحشا طعناتها
والخيل لم تبرح تطير بمزهم صهواتها

Apart from the mention of tribes, swords and spears, the poem imparts an ancient spirit of chivalry and courage where the souls of men flow on the swords and the fighting is done on gallant Arabian horses that fly like Djinns.[15]

In theme, al-Kāẓimı wrote many poems of occasion, private and public. He is, however, one of the first heralds of Arab nationalism among the Iraqi poets, and it does seem strange, at first sight, that the introduction of such a new theme did not call for a change in diction and phraseology. But the secret must surely lie in the fact that he treated the subject very traditionally, making of the Arab nation an object of eulogy and fakhr, in a typically traditional manner, eulogized the Arab princes in whom his generation had hopes and faith[16] and tried to awaken in the nation a Bedouin spirit of chivalry, thus producing a nationalistic poetry somewhat removed from the immediate active scene of the national struggle. In this al-Raṣāfi and other poets of his generation surpassed him. These verses of al-Kāẓimi could have been written at any time:

17

ايها العرب لا جرم انتمو خيرة الامم
انتم المجد كله وبنو المجد والكرم

(ii) Al-Shabībi

Muḥammad Riḍà al-Shabībi (b.1890?), came of an eminent Najafi family, and was educated at Najaf in the best Najafi tradition of literature, for his father was a prominent poet of his own generation.[18] Al-Shabībi, moreover, was among the many Najafis who went to Baghdad during the national rule and we see him in the thirties and forties occupying high posts in the government. He is a conservative poet, but his poetry is linked with the Classical tradition, his verse showing direct influences from it. However, he mostly writes in the tradition of al-Sharīf al-Raḍi[19] and carries his grace and his peculiar appeal to the gentler side of the emotions. ʿAbbūd, reviewing his diwan in the forties, cannot but fall under the charm of his verse, and praises it[20] while commenting on its Classical affinities.[21] But al-Shabībi is saved in his application of the traditional method by several factors in his poetry: firstly, by his instinctive abhorrence of exaggeration in either his political or his love poetry. Secondly by a lower tone of voice that shrinks from resonance and hollow phraseology. Thirdly by a veracity of emotion that is in itself a considerable achievement for that time, in view of the poet's strong Classical links and immediate nineteenth century background, a great part of which was sham. Al Shabībi began writing about 1908, prompted by public events[22] but his diwan entitled Dīwān al-Shabībi, was published only in 1940, and contains his poetic works over thirty years.

Al-Shabībi is also a conservative in some of his social attitudes,* thus falling behind his more progressive contemporaries, al-Raṣāfi and al-Zahāwi. But he is deeply involved in the political struggle of his people and his commitment, as that of his brother, the poet Muḥammad Baqir (1889-1960),[23] is authentic. Al-Shabībi has a firm belief in the vital relevance of poetry to political and social events of the poet's times.[24]

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* Witness for example his concept of woman's place in society as being merely the home:

25 بتدبير المنازل هن اولى وهم اولى بتدبير النزال
ومن للنسل تربية وحفظا اذا ساوينا في كل حال

But whether he writes on nationalism or on love (and the latter is the more popular theme of his poetry)[26] a pure lyricism, a fine choice of diction,[27] an exceptional grace of style and a flow of rhythm persist. Only Badawi al-Jabal, his Syrian contemporary could surpass the Classical grace of al-Shabībi's poetry. The following examples are interesting from this aspect and also because they show some of his Classical influences:

28

ما زال في الصلوات الخمس ذكركم ... نجوى مصلاى او تسبيح محرابي

يا راقدى الليل منجابا طلامهم ... طلام ليلي هذا غير منجاب

نادمتكم من مكاني واصطحبتكم ... وان اكن مستقلا بين اصحابي

فان معطي الهوى لم يبق باقية ... من الهوى للداتي او لاترابي

29

لله عصبتك العشاق كم جزعوا ... مما لقيت فما اغنوا وكم صبروا

تحملوا من عناء فوق طاقتهم ... ففارقوا الناس الا انهم بشر

بتنا نؤملهم من بعدما وردوا ... ان يصدروا بأمانيهم فما صدروا

ظل ما تشاء زماني لست لي عمرا ... ادراك ما اتمناه هو العمر

And this rather original verse:

30

اني لاكره سلوتي اما الهوى ... — وعيونكم — فاحبه واحبه

It is a pity that completely new trends in contemporary Arabic poetry have overshadowed such transparent expression and eloquence of style, and although al-Shabībi has had his influence on modern Iraqi poetry,[31] he is little known to the generation of Arab poets who are writing now outside Iraq. Compared with al-Raṣāfi's pan-Arabic fame over half a century, the superior aesthetic value of al-Shabībi's poetry seems to have had an unfair deal.

2. THE CHANGE OF THE POETIC SENSIBILITY

(i) Al-Zahāwi and al-Raṣāfi

To every student of Arabic poetry the names of al-Raṣāfi and al-Zahāwi are familiar. These two poets seem to dominate the Iraqi poetic scene in the first decades of this century. With them Iraqi poetry became important on a pan-Arabic level. The unfortunate isolation imposed upon Iraqi poetry by bad means of communication in the nineteenth century was now over. With the better circulation of Arab periodicals and the political awakening that took place in the first decade when the Ottoman Constitution was granted, Iraq appeared on the Arab poetic arena fully armed and extremely vigorous. We see al-Zahāwi publishing his first diwan, Al-Kalām al-Manẓūm in Beirut in 1908,[32] followed by al-Raṣāfi who published his also in Beirut in 1910 under the title of Dīwān al-Raṣāfi. We also see how al-Kāẓimi had made Egypt his home at the end of the last century. But even before that al-Zahāwi was already known to the Arab reader through his original and daring treatises which he had published in Al-Muqtaṭaf and al-Hilāl,[33] his poetry being known to this reader under a pseudonym in the Egyptian periodicals. Al-Raṣāfi's poetry was also known to the Arab reader very early in the century through its publication in Egyptian and Syrian magazines and he had gained a very early fame as a poet.[34]

With these two Iraqi poets, moreover, there was a shift of the poetic scene from the Shī'ah centres of al-Najaf and al-Ḥillah to Baghdad, the previous home also of al-Jamīl and al-Akhras in the nineteenth century. The fact that al-Najaf was the most fertile poetic field in Iraq should not give the impression that Baghdad did not have its own well-guarded literary life. For, like al-Najaf, Baghdad had its many families who were prominent in the fields of scholarship and literature, and the literary salon seems to have been an established meeting place for men of letters.[35] These salons were held originally in the homes of the more

prominent literary men and literati but later it became customary for them to hold their literary circles which abounded with humour and literary exchange also in the picturesque cafes at the banks of the Tigris.[36]

Al-Najaf now, as the centre of the poetic activity in Iraq, was to recede a little to the background but was to continue, nevertheless, to enrich the poetic field by the many poetic talents she produced. The two Shabībi brothers, ʿAbd al-Bāqir and Muḥammad Riḍa, the poet ʿAli al-Sharqi, the roving poet Aḥmad al-Ṣāfī al-Najafī and the great Muḥammad Mahdı al-Jawāhiri are all from al-Najaf. These poets, fed and nourished in their early days by the Najaf tradition, joined the stream of office seekers for whom the capital, now growing rapidly under the national rule in the twenties, was the only goal. The exception among them was al-Ṣāfi who spent his life in a self-imposed exile in Syria and Lebanon.

With al-Zahāwi and al-Raṣāfi there is an immediate adventure with themes and with the language of poetry. Their lives were directly tied to political events. With them the personality of the poet as the political and social spokesman of his people is firmly established.[37] Any reader of the early poetry of these decades will notice the close commitment of poetry to public life. And, as has been established elsewhere in this work, the political and social poetry become the first means of rejuvinating Arabic poetry in modern times through the demands these new themes had on the various elements of poetry: on the diction, the style and the emotion.

It is important at this point to describe the general qualities of these three elements and mention briefly their gradual development before we proceed to assess the achievements of the individual poets.

Any work on the poetry of this changing period must take into consideration the basic and inseparable relationship between theme on the one hand, and diction, style, attitude, tone and emotion on the other. In the first few decades of this century, a special kind of committed poetry

which became then established and continued to appear up till the present time, developing in the meantime its own special characteristics, and finally becoming a genre in itself. For want of a better term this kind of poetry might best be referred to as 'platform poetry'. A more detailed discussion of this will be made later in this work, but at this point it is its first formative stage that is relevant and a brief examination of its more important early elements must be undertaken.

Diction and style: The diction in the political and social poetry was very much simplified and an attempt at modernization was made by most of the poets. Perhaps the Iraqi poets are the best example to illustrate the struggle which took place in poetry to change from a Medieval to a modern poetic diction because this struggle took place against a stronger Classical background. The outcome will show not only variety but also considerable contrast. The stubborn traditionalism of al-Kāẓimi is in sharp contrast to the extreme simplification of al-Zahāwi in whose poetry language loses its former weight as a value in itself and becomes a means of expressing his ideas and attitudes towards varied and often unpoetic themes, as will be mentioned later. Banality and lack of lustre are some of the defects of this early development.

The style attains of necessity great directness and clarity. But firstly because of an acquired weakness in trying to express new meanings in a more appropriate style and language, and secondly because the audience of poetry was becoming continuously larger and hence less learned and selective, certain flaws begin to appear, such as dilution, increased rhetoric, pompousness and a didactic insistence on an unnecessary repetition of meaning . It is in this period, moreover, that the many catch-words, slogans and stock phrases of the contemporary 'platform poetry' originate. Examples of this will be given later in chapter 7.

The emotion in this kind of poetry is salient and sometimes over-powering. In the social poetry it begins, especially with al-Raṣāfi, by

being a sort of emotion aiming at reform. The didactic role of the poet dominates and his most pronounced emotions are pity, the prerogative of the strong, and sometimes a sort of 'pious anger'.[38] The first few decades of the century failed on the whole, to produce poets able to identify themselves either subtly and spontaneously with the social tragedy they describe, or to see in the bad social conditions the seeds of revolution. This last attitude, however, gradually made its appearance in poetry before the end of the first half century leading eventually to the establishment of the neo-Realist school in modern Arabic poetry whose theoretical concepts were borrowed from foreign fields.

In political poetry, however, the poet showed immediate personal involvement, as early as al-Raṣāfi and the rest of his generation, and even earlier. Yet despite personal involvement, the poet remained for the most part a teacher, a herald with a loud voice, waking up the sleeping nation. He is a listening post for events and his involvement includes not only the Arab world, but also the Oriental and Islamic.[39] Poetry of this kind often saw some very fiery emotions, more communal than personal, and aimed more at stirring an immediate response than at creating a feeling of personal liability. Often the response of some poets to a given situation appears to be a commitment to a role, a sort of infection spreading among them all.

With the years this type of socio-political poetry divided itself into two streams of equal importance, though not of equal artistic value. One stream allied itself with the poet-orator and developed into the platform poetry mentioned above. It involved naked emotions and was full of catch-words and stock phrases, as will be described later. The other stream integrated itself with an avant-garde movement in the fifties towards depth and subtlety, some of it developing great sophistication and modernity. Love of country did not become a cult and a sort of communal ritual as it did with the first kind, but a search for identity and human dignity. It

is important to realise the presence of these differences from the outset so that the development of Arabic poetry as followed in this work, may be more readily understood: a development not only of form and content, but also a gradual development towards modern artistic sophistication.

Al-Zahāwi and al-Raṣāfi were the two poets who exemplified in their poetry the values and aspirations of the first three decades of this century in Iraq. The activity of this period of Iraqi life revolved in turn around the Ottoman Constitution bringing with it waves of awareness on both the national and intellectual fronts, the Great World War of 1914-1918 which faced the Arabs with new responsibilities, and the British occupation which revealed dangers and was the cause of a long struggle beginning with the 1920 revolution. It also brought its own choice of National rule, a Hashimite king whose revered lineage was to confront the Arabs of Iraq with conflicting emotions and loyalties. This is a worthwhile consideration because this situation enhanced the political experience of the Iraqis early in the century, and made the Iraqi poet arrive more quickly than his other compatriots at the point of self-rejection and revolt. In other Arab countries such as Syria, Lebanon and Palestine there was direct and apparent foreign rule and the poet's rejection was directed towards the foreign intruders. Real self-awareness took hold of the poets of these countries only after they had rid themselves of the outsider (or, as in the case of Palestine) lost everything to him. Only then, and this only happened in the forties, could self-awareness, which is an essential ingredient of mature poetry, dawn fully on them. But by the forties the Iraqi poets had already arrived at revolt. This helps to explain in part why the Iraqi poets were the ones who took the lead in poetic reform in the late forties and early fifties of this century.

Al-Zahāwi spent his youth and early manhood during the Ottoman period.

Yet he was able to free himself, with astonishing alacrity, from the stagnant and obsolete conceptions of life and art, even before the end of this century. Al-Zahāwi, like so many of the Iraqi poets of his generation including al-Raṣāfi, was tied to the wheel of politics, and not without some hint of self-interest. The personality of the poet-artist in its modern avant-garde sense, in which the poet regards himself to be above politics and committed only to life, and in which the field of poetry is separated from the centres of authority or from the manipulation of the political machine, was not yet fully known in the Arab world. A traditional linkage with high authority remained an important characteristic of these early poets. This was even more enhanced in the first decades of this century because the poets were among the few educated men available then. Moreover, the authorities of that time, like the authorities now, must have recognised the effectiveness of poetry on the Arab people and rewarded, appeased[40] or neglected and sometimes even persecuted the more prominent poets according to their attitudes. Al-Zahāwi's and al-Raṣāfi's lives reflect this relationship very clearly.

The association of al-Zahāwi with the various political authorities who ruled Iraq in his lifetime, which alternated between radical defiance[41] and humble acquiescence[42] as reflected in his poetry, presents a wavering line of approach[43] which can astound and even annoy the reader, if all of al-Zahāwi's poetry should be taken seriously. But the Arab reader now leaves aside most of his poetry and preserves his loyalty for a few of the poet's more impressive poems.

Writers on the life and works of al-Zahāwi,[44] although they recognise his many interesting qualities, nearly always stress mainly his role as a poet. Al-Zahāwi's poetry, although a sustained production on his part, was not the main reason for his importance to the Baghdad of the early decades of this century or to the Arab world. For the man was one of the most astonishing free-thinkers[45] of the early century, and when one thinks

of his love of freedom,[46] his drastic call for the emancipation of women,[47] and for the woman's right to choose her partner,[48] or divorce him,[49] his love of scientific experimentation,[50] his call for secularism,[51] his charming ridicule of the sterile-minded clergymen,[52] his doubts and spiritual conflicts,[53] his passion for modernism and progress,[54] and his daring early call to change the Arabic script,[55] one cannot help but recognise in al-Zahāwi a far greater value than his limited poetic talent could have yielded.[56] His immediate influence on his countrymen must have been deep and enlightening.[57]

For al-Zahāwi represents "a particular phenomenon of civilisation."[58] This phenomenon lies in the new courage and adventurous spirit he showed as an enlightened poet living at that particular time in Iraq, a country only recently awake to life and progress and still steeped in ignorance and fanatic conventionalism.[59] We have had more examples of this phenomenon of courage in other Arab countries: in Ṭāhā Ḥusain's challenge to tradition and al-ʿAqqad's challenge to his contemporary poetry. But al-Zahāwi's challenge to tradition and religion was by far the greatest. The benefit it gave to poetry was to introduce this new courage and to acquire the capacity to rove freely, touching on new and often complicated subjects and expressing the most rebellious ideas in verse.

Al-Zahāwi issued in his lifetime five collections of poetry.[60] A sixth collection was published posthumously[61] and a seventh, Al-Nazaghāt, known to have been lost, was found and published lately by Hilāl Nāji, as has been mentioned above.[62]

There is very little artistic development in al-Zahāwi's poetry over the years. He concentrated more on meaning[63] than on phraseology. Content to him was the main field of adventure and he meandered from social problems[64] to political topics, and from personal relations to philosophical monologues. One theme which he believed to be new and indicative of progress was his versifications of scientific subjects, which were completely

unsuited for poetry.[65] They were didactic,[66] boring and not free from a naive sort of secret glee on the part of the poet at being in a position to transmit such 'valuable knowledge' to his readers.

In his great adventure in meaning he had of necessity to employ new tools. The elements in his poetry that underwent change most were diction and style. He had advocated simplicity[67] but in the achievement of this simplicity he often arrived at banality. His Kurdish background,[68] his knowledge of Turkish and Persian,[69] his irregular schooling, mostly at home in his boyhood and later by teaching himself,[70] might have made it possible for him to arrive at this sort of nonchalance regarding the choice of the poetic word and to his sentence formation. Such verses show a drastic weakness of style:

سجنوهـــن في البيوت فشلـــوا نصف شعب بهم بالحركـــات 71

لاشكـــرن ســـمـــــاء قد امطرتني رذاذا
ما تنـــت آمل منهـــا قبل المواسم هـــذا 72

and of banality of meaning:

ان جســـــم المرء للـــــروح التي فيـه يقـوت 73
فاذا ما مـــات جسـم المرء فالـــروح تمـــــوت

There are numerous examples in his many anthologies of such unforgivable banality. They abound with poems suffering from great dilution, unnecessary repetitiveness and flabbiness, as well as absurdities and banalities of meaning.[74] If the art of literature is to adjust the language to embody what it indicates, at the same time keeping to an artistic level, al-Zahāwi's experiment achieved, in the main, only the first part, for in the process he often stripped the language of its necessary poetic qualities. On the other hand, he did succeed in creating a verse that approximated to ordinary speech,[75] and, in loosening the rhythms of Arabic poetry, freed it to a certain extent from its rhetoric din.

There is no indication that al-Zahāwi was influenced by the spiritual

adventures and conflicts of the Mahjar poets.[76] His metaphysical meanderings, mostly embodied in Al-Nazaghāt,[77] seem to be in harmony with his whole personality and mind. The following verse comes from Al-Nazaghāt,

تحيرت لا ادري امام الحقائق أأني خلقت الله ام هو خالقي [78]

this theme was well known in the poetry revealed during his lifetime.[79] However, in his treatment of such themes, there was more mischief and devilishness than agonised spiritual conflict. What elevates some of his verses here is their authenticity, and their light-hearted spirit. Al-Zahāwi was not a tragic poet, although he treated serious, and often tragic subjects like death. His work lacks the explicit rendering of emotion[80] found in great poetry, but he compensates a great deal by his quick-wittedness, mischievous brilliance and irony.[81]

Like some other poets of his generation al-Zahāwi tried to explain his views on poetry. He wrote several articles on his idea of the poetic concept as well as many poems. A progressive by nature, his ideas on poetry were bound to encourage innovation. The poet in his opinion should innovate without losing the spirit of Arabic poetry.[82] He may even invent words to suit the meanings he wishes to express, a process which enriches the language.[83] As for metres there should be no strict rules about them and the "poet can compose according to the metres set by al-Khalīl or according to other /metrical laws/".[84] But metre is essential in poetry and an essential way of expression when excitement or agitation take hold of a person. Indeed metrical rhythm originated in such states as these and is directly connected to highly charged emotions[85] - a worthwhile idea which M, Nuwaihī has developed more recently, devoting a whole chapter to the subject.[86] As for rhyme, a play of rhymes is permissible,[87] and even the omission of rhyme altogether.[88]

Poetry is to him the outcome of the poet's feelings.[89] He stressed this point considerably both in his prose and poetry, thus unifying the

attempt that was being made in Egypt to connect poetry with feeling and experience, as we have already seen. Poetry, moreover, must be authentic, free from artifice and exaggeration,[90] and based on truth.[91] In fact, truth according to him, is more important than emotion and imagination.[92]

Poetry should also have an altruistic aim.[93] A poet should never cater to the multitude and flatter them in order to gain popularity with them, for great poetry is based only on absolute truths in life.[94] As for him personally, his poetry reflects his life and the life and conditions in his country.[95] He asserted, moreover, that he never wrote except when he was prompted by an impulse to write.[96]

These are some of his more vital ideas on poetry. His idea that poetry is of an organic nature, that renews itself and develops from simplicity to complexity,[97] is offset by his belief, in both theory[98] and practice,[99] that unity was not essential in a poem, for a poet can combine in some poems more than one theme.

Al-Zahāwi's legacy to Arabic poetry was considerable. He set a standard of courage and adventure in experimentation. At his hand poetry became emancipated from the age when it was synonymous with lofty, flowery language, and rich with luxurious resonance. And although Iraqi poets after him in general, with the exception of al-Ṣāfi perhaps, were to try to shake off the effects of his style and to boil away all that was not poetic in poetry, his kind of courage persisted. New adventures in the poetic diction and style were to be made and a new capacity to arrive at a more subtle simplicity was finally to be achieved.

In Iraq and the Arab World the name of Al-Zahāwi was linked, and still is, with that of al-Raṣāfı. However, the two were seldom on good terms and the Baghdadi lovers of poetry took part in the conflict for leadership between the two poets.[100] This rivalry was conducive to a sort of mutual influence of one on the other, with advantages and disadvantages. Perhaps the worst outcome of this situation was that al-Raṣāfı, probably in imitation

of al-Zahāwi,[101] wrote several poems on scientific and astronomical themes. These subjects, in this way of presentation, were not only out of the scope of the material of poetry, but also far away from al-Raṣāfī's natural aptitudes. These pathetic poems were almost completely devoid of any emotional involvement and had a sort of primitive wonder in them which was ludicrous.[102] This was taking yet a step further into the malady that had taken hold on the creativity of that first generation in its attempt to prove itself 'modern' and 'up-to-date' by speaking about modern inventions and scientific subjects, an approach sarcastically and violently attacked by al-ʿAqqād, as has been mentioned.

Al-Raṣāfī was not in need of such self-assertion. By 1910 when his first diwan was published he was already emerging as the foremost among the socially minded poets of his generation, and this not only in Iraq but all over the Arab world, as well as one of the most fiery nationalists. He had acquired a great pan-Arabic reputation[103] and in 1920 when he toured the Arab world, afterwards settling for some time in Jerusalem, his fame had already preceded him.[104]

Born in Baghdad, he carried out his linguistic and literary studies with one of Baghdad's greatest masters of religious and linguistic studies, al-Sheikh Maḥmūd Shukri al-Alūsi.[105] He stayed with him for about twelve years[106] and when al-Alūsi was exiled from Baghdad by the Ottoman authorities, al-Raṣāfi was already well versed in language and Classical poetry.[107]

Al-Raṣāfī started his career during the Ottoman period. Like al-Zahāwi, he went to Turkey during the first decade of the twentieth century and met there the free Turks, coming into contact with the ideas of the French revolution which had been translated into Turkish.[108] These ideas were spreading quickly among the young generation of revolutionaries who later accomplished the overthrow of ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II and eventually of the whole Ottoman Caliphate. These influences fell on fertile ground and al-Raṣāfi's reaction to them was deep and sincere.

Al-Raṣāfi's name is linked with the political events of Iraqi history in the first few decades of this century, as well as with its social development. In him there is a more constant line of development in political thought and affinities than in al-Zahāwi, although he did occasionally waver in his attitudes.[109] His career was linked with public office and public life, which led him to alternate between acceptance and rejection of authority: Ottoman, British[110] and National.[111] But rejection and rebellion were the most pronounced attitudes in his poetry and life. A man of proud and impulsive nature, he was not inclined on the whole to appease when unsavoury situations existed. Thus he lived a life of relative poverty, exile and deprivation of work.[112] His occasional political vascillations were due mostly to his public ambition, traditional in the Arab poet, to an impulsive and impressionistic temperament[113] and, as in the Jerusalem incident, to a political naiveness, common in the earlier decades of this century.

His involvement in the social problems of his country was a genuine and constant obsession. He had known poverty in his childhood, which he spent in a Baghdad slum.[114] His teacher, al-Alūsi, who was keen on religious reform, must have imbued his illustrious student with the passion for reform.[115] Al-Raṣāfí's sympathy with the persecuted,[116] the unhappy lot of women,[117] the oppressed workers,[118] and the poor in general[119] has made him one of the foremost pioneers of reform and progress[120] in the early decades of this century. In fact al-Raṣāfi's poetry as a whole should be of real benefit to the student of social psychology and to the sociologist, being as it is, a landmark in the progress and development of nationalist and socialist ideas in the Arab East.[121] After him, even contemporary with him, reaction against the squalor, stagnation, misery and the enveloping atmostphere of despair on the social and political fronts would lead to their total rejection in poetry, even to a call for armed rebellion. This was best exemplified in Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Baḥr al-'Ulūm[122]

and Muḥammad Mahdi al-Jawāhiri. Compared to verses like these by M. Ṣ. Bahr al-'Ulūm addressing the peasant

123 فاترك السزرع ونح المنجـــلا عنك حينا واملأ الارض دمـــا

وبحد السيف حاســـب دولا بينها حقك اضحى مغنمـــا

al-Raṣāfi's social poetry seems moderate and aiming only at reform.[124] This is interesting because al-Raṣāfi's political poetry seethes with an inciting kind of indignation and shows, in some of its more famous examples, great courage and defiance. Examples in his poetry are numerous but the following is of particular interest.

125 من اين يرجى للعراق تقـدم وسبيل ممتلكيـه غير سبيلـه

لا خـير في وطـن يكـون السيـف عند جبانه والمال عند بخيلـه

والرأى عنـد طريده والعلـم عند غريبـه والحكـم عنـد دخيلـه

وقد استبدّ قليلـه بكثيـره ظلما وذل كثيـره لقليلـه

The political struggle in the Arab world is an older issue than the social struggle, and al-Raṣāfi's political attitudes were quite in advance of the level of awakening, and the general social concepts of the period.[126]

Nowadays al-Raṣāfi is praised mainly for his role as poet-instigator and poet-reformer who brought new emotions and new ideas to the social and political fronts.[127] This often diverts the attention away from aesthetic values and presupposes the presence of abundant poetic merit. But although an assessment of an established author cannot be merely aesthetic, a book on poetry must take into account first and foremost the poet's actual poetic achievement. This achievement is assessed in two ways: as an achievement in the aesthetic aspect of the poetic art, and as a link in the chain of development of that art. In the latter case it has a historical merit for us which must not be overlooked. Al-Raṣāfi's poetical achievement belongs, as did that of al-Zahāwi, to this latter type, and writers who see in al-Raṣāfi's poetry certain flagrant defects and dismiss it as 'bad'[128] overlook, not only certain aesthetic values which the poet achieved, but also the value of his poetry as a liberating force in

the development of the poetry of the early decades of this century.

For al-Raṣāfi was the first Iraqi poet to break through the traditional and reactionary methods of thinking and expression and to bring poetry out to both the heat and blizzard of life around him. This was a great victory for modern poetry.[129] In his best political and national poems are exemplified all the aspirations, the anger, and the anxiety of his generation all over the Arab world. He did not achieve this through a true artistic revolution in form, imagery and tone, or a divorce from what was still essential in the poetic tradition and capable of being exploited and manipulated, but rather through turning his back on an old and outworn mentality. His emotional development and his intellectual awareness, however, were not matched by an equal development in the modern concept of poetry, or by an established flexibility of the poetic tools. Driven by the prerequisites of a new theme and a new type of audience (the general public), he resorted to simplicity of diction and expression but had often to force the words and phrases to translate his emotions and thoughts. There is in his poetry this sort of heroic struggle with language and style which sometimes left him tired and panting. But at other times he achieved great purity of style like these verses:

برئت الى الاحرار من شر امة ... اسيرة حكام ثقال قيودها [130]
....
عجبت لقوم يخضعون لدولة ... يسوسهم بالموبقات عميدها
واعجب من ذا انهم يرهبونها ... واموالها منهم ومنهم جنودها

A world of revolution was now open to him and sometimes walking straight, sometimes limping, he managed to leave his mark on the poetry of his era.

His original strong linguistic education does not seem always to have been an asset in his treatment of new themes, for his often simple verses can be studded with words from the Classical treasury. Classical, often Bedouin affinities, are apparent.[131] These strong Classical roots

often led him to a strange and pedantic choice of rhyme such as this:

132 اقول وليل الغرب ليس بنائـــم اما لنيام القوم في الشرق من بعـــث
لقد جاح هذا الشرق بعد اعتـزازه جوائح اودت منه بالكرش والفـــرث

In a poem in which ' ض ' is chosen for the rhyme, such words as appear.[133] تئيض ،قضيض ،جريض ، مرحوض ، الحريض ، تنبيـض ، عضوض الـخ .

Banalities which show an oversimplified concept of the poetic art and its commitment to the social build-up of the nation, as well as a certain naivety[134] are also many in his poetry. Verses like these cannot be accepted from an established poet in more recent times:

135 كل ابن آدم مقهـور بعـادات لهن ينقاد في كـل الارادات

and this:

136 قل لنجلا ،نجلا ابي اللمعانـي عاشق نور فجرها الوضـاح

and this on a circus:

137 الليك ما شاهدت نفسي من العجب في مسرح ماج بين الجد واللعب
خافوا به ان تقوم الاسد واثبـة حتى بغوا حاجزا فيه من الخشب

He sometimes simply versified a fact:

138 كل ما في البلاد من اموال ليس الا نتيجة الاعمـال
ان يطب في حياتنا الاجتماعية عيش فالفضل للعمـال

But his worst fault was his conception of the poet as continuously active in public life so that his collection is full of poems of occasion showing his participation in public activities of all sorts. 'Abbūd, writing about him, calls the poems of occasion "the cholera of poetry and the plague of literature"[139] and criticises him severely for them.[140]

Al-Raṣāfi's poetry, then, shows different levels of creativity[141] as is bound to happen when poetry takes in for the first time in one era other realms of experience at the hands of a poet whose poetic gift is not particularly great. If then there is a marked levelling down of poetry at his hands, and if he was not able to bring his poetry to a state of homogenous fullness similar to that of great poetry, what then made him so

effective in his own time?[142]

The secret probably lies in his passionate simplicity, which stands out despite all the other faults. Instinctively involved in the situation of which he wrote, he captured the communal spirit as no poet had done before him, chose his words to suit the communal emotions of all the Arabs and spoke not only about the public and to it, but also on behalf of it.[143] This is why his poetry was necessarily a poetry of his age. It was not well suited to remote and timeless subjects which he attempted and failed. Poetry at his hands not only attained clarity and simplicity, as did that of al-Zahāwi, but also a sort of communal emotion, which reflected fully the national experience. With him the personality of the poet as a national fighter for his people's cause became well established.[144] For this kind of achievement he had not only to strive for simplicity but also for dramatic effect, a quality which was to develop in 'platform poetry' over the years. This is why when recited his poetry, unlike al-Zahāwi's, swells often with a jostling and poignant repetition of vowels and consonants, with immense effect on the audience. Many of his poems would read poorly in private but bring ecstacy when declaimed in public. The art of declaimed poetry was now being revived gradually and would even gain greater fullness and importance in the coming decades as it had never done before.

(ii) Al-Ṣāfī

A streak of dry humour had started to appear in Iraqi poetry with al-Zahāwi. This, and the tendency to simplicity were to be followed with greater success by Aḥmad al-Ṣāfi al-Najafī (b. c. 1895). A rover poet who spent his lonely, poverty-stricken days between Syria and Lebanon, al-Ṣāfī's poetic contribution was destined to be overshadowed by greater poetic events in the last decades, which were to rob it of much of the appreciation due to it as an original, diversified experiment which renewed many of the poetic tools. Moreover, a partial concept of poetry

among the avant garde poets of the fifties and sixties, which bred an attitude of fanaticism, led to a neglect of the poet's work in avant garde poetic circles. In these circumstances, it seemed that al-Ṣāfi's poetic contribution which continued to flow, was destined in its last years to a form of isolation.[145] The ordinary reader, however, was still able to enjoy his poetry, published in one collection after another mostly by one of the most active publishing firms in Beirut, Lebanon.[146]

Al-Ṣāfi has issued to date ten anthologies of poetry, but his first, Al-Amwāj (The Waves), first published in 1932, is still the most popular, and has had at least four publications.

Brought up in the Najaf tradition of language and literature, al-Ṣāfi showed quite early in his career a genuine reluctance to follow the trodden ways of past generations of poets or to stick to linguistic abstruseness and pedantry. In this he may have been influenced by his famous and older contemporary, al-Zahāwi, but also by a genuine poetic instinct and a great and noble independence of spirit and ways. Al-Zahāwi, when the poet met him in 1927[147] immediately recognised in him a colleague and a disciple and declared himself proud to have 'discovered' him.[148] Al-Ṣāfi had already passed through perhaps the hardest experiences of his hard life. He had struggled against the British occupation, had fled his town and then the whole country out of fear of arrest, had been exposed to great dangers and hardships and to severe illnesses.[149] Two years later another severe illness decided his destiny: he had to leave the harsh weather of Iraq and settle in Syria.[150]

Al-Ṣāfi is a poet of extreme simplicity of style and with a poetic diction that often approximates to ordinary speech.[151] In his contemplation of life he is very contemporaneous, not only on a philosophical, nationalistic and social level, to which so many of his contemporary poets restricted themselves, but also on the particular and lesser scale of individual life around him, which is a more difficult achievement. At his

hands modern poetry was able to treat the ordinary subjects of daily life without faltering or appearing ridiculous as did al-ʿAqqād's poems in ʿĀbir Sabīl, described above. The vital difference between the two is that al-Ṣāfi is interested in life and the human condition and can pave his way to pathetic or comical situations with ease and clarity; while al-ʿAqqād in his attempts in this field either invented a false situation or over-dramatised a simple one often imposing a tragic note on an inanimate situation.

Thus al-Ṣāfi while presenting a wide variety of experience gives his reader the impression of a man deeply involved in an open fight with the ills, pettiness,[152] sordidness,[153] shortcomings,[154] lethargy,[155] hypocrisy,[156] ignorance,[157] greed,[158] crudeness,[159] chaos and demagogic politics[160] of daily Arab life around him. He manages to summon a sort of reticent humour, delineating the picture often in minute detail, arguing with his objects, scorning them, sometimes even rebuking them harshly, but without seeming to preach.

A back-cloth of deep emotion lurks subtly behind the lines. The luxurious riot of al-Raṣāfi's poetry and its echoing resonance are absent, conquered by al-Ṣāfi's more personal tone, but the complete absence of emotional mawkishness is in itself an achievement in view of the fact that al-Ṣāfī felt deeply all that he said.

Moreover, al-Ṣāfi is a formidably proud man, a quality which has lent more value to his figure as a poet, for he has borne poverty and loneliness rather than demean himself by any sort of flattery to either the political authorities or the public. This quality was in itself a revolution of a kind, recognised by several critics including ʿAbbūd.[161] In his poetry neither the pompous attitude of the national poet, nor the slavish attitude of the eulogist had a place.[162] His personal ruin is an image of rare heroism, a private heroism hardly known in contemporary Arab life. For in Arab life now the image of the hero is a national

image and heroism is connected with the public cause. This silent life-long crucifixion, this complete denial and rejection of all the loud activities of contemporary Arab life as they expressed themselves in a paradoxical existence of love of country and love of the private good life, has lent great weight and strength of spirit to his poetry. Neither did he accept compromise, nor exhibitionism. He paved his way towards depicting the human condition by depicting his own isolation with poignancy and candour.[163] This was a new realm of experience in poetry far removed from the affected isolation of the Romantics of the thirties and after. At its best, this isolation gave him clear perspective and vision; at its worst, it turned him into an eccentric, not free from a tone of self-righteousness. But mostly, it was an isolation of anger, as a strong and sustained rejection of the underlying currents of contemporary life in his own world, with all their failings and shortcomings. Modern Arabic poetry can benefit considerably from a study of this isolated experiment.

It is interesting to note that two prominent poets, the Romantic Lebanese poet of the thirties Ilyās Abū Shabakah, and the avant garde Iraqi poet of the fifties, Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, both agree that al-Ṣāfi's contribution is an important event in modern Arabic poetry.[164] A leftist Lebanese critic, Ra'īf al-Khouri, looks into the artistic depths of his experiment and sees in him a true artist who, despite some flaws in his poetry, can arrest the attention of the reader for a long time.[165] Yet, al-Ṣāfi is not committed to any special trend in life or politics. The author perhaps of the most expressive poem on the condition of the Iraqi peasant,[166] al-Ṣāfi does not refrain, for example, from satirizing the life of the poor with its noise, crudeness and dirt. As has been mentioned above, other committed critics of less poetic insight than al-Khouri, might find in this a failing in the poet's social duty, for they might insist that he should have seen the wayward and frustrating causes of such conditions in the slums. But al-Ṣāfi has no intention here of

analysing causes, but of simply describing [illegible]en situation in life. He was committed to life, not to any adopted ideology that would turn a poet into a preacher or a reformer.[167] He had a deep love for clean, innocent things, for things of nature and the elements, for the sea,[168] birds,[169] flowers,[170] insects[171] and animals in general.[172] His sympathy with the oppressed, the stray and the needy is unrivalled in Arabic poetry, old or new.

But this poetic experiment which is highly adventurous in the light of al-Ṣāfi's early education at Najaf, did not pass without some serious flaws. A flabbiness of style, a prosaic phraseology, an insistence on elucidation and unnecessary repetition thus paying excessive attention to detail and an occasional but constant carelessness in the use of language, and a certain lack of lustre have combined to make al-Ṣāfı's poetry a target for the criticism of several critics.[173] 'Abbūd and al-Sāmirrā'ı who mostly criticised his careless use of language and his occasional weakness of style, ('Abbūd dwelling more on the lack of music, lustre and conciseness[174])did not try to assess the importance of his experiment in diction, attitude, tone and versatility of theme, nor the plasticity of style he acquired. 'Abbūd, however, is aware of his difficulties as a poet treating of completely new areas of experience.[175] Al-Ṣāfi himself defended his own weaknesses in no uncertain terms:

176 الشاعر الحر نسر يسف حينا ويعلو

Had al-Ṣāfi been more deferential to modern criticism, in its higher examples, he might have benefited from the new concepts which insisted on a poem being a compact creation where meanings are more implied than explicitly expressed. However, some of his poems arrive at great depth and beauty, like this:

177 تناقضت الافكار عندى كأنما انا جمع اشخاص وما انا واحد
. . . . . .
فكم ذرة تفنى وتولد ذرة بجسمي كما تحيا وتفنى القصائد
فلي كل حين مأتم وولادة وشخصي مولود وشخصي والد

(iii) Al-Jawāhiri

Al-Ṣāfi's contribution, despite its great service to the elements of sympathy and truth in poetry was not able to infuse any real warmth of emotion in his abundant verse. But a voltage of emotional energy was to be conveyed by Muḥammad Mahdi al-Jawāhiri (1900). He is another poet from al-Najaf who is undoubtedly the greatest Iraqi poet of his generation. Brought up in the traditional culture of the ancient town,[178] and exceptionally well-versed in Classical poetry, he is said to have memorised all of al-Mutanabbi and a large part of the poetry of other famous Classical poets.[179] His admiration of al-Buḥturí, and his minute study of the poet's technique and methods[180] however, did not result in any significant direct links with this particular poet. For al-Jawāhiri, in his surging verse and complicated poetic personality is more like al-Mutanabbi and Abū Tammām than al-Buḥturi,[181] having very little of al-Buḥturi's gentle well-polished highly urbanised style. Nahj al-Balāghah [182] is another religious source, beside al-Quran, which gave strength and vitality to his style and imagery. Other Shī'ah poets in this century were also affected by it. Syria produced at least two important Shī'ah poets* in this century whose childhood education was influenced by this superior religious text.

Al-Jawāhiri is regarded by critics as the foremost poet to reflect Iraq's troubled life since the twenties[183]. However, he started his career in typical conventional manner by writing eulogies, which he still does, mu'āradāt,[184] and other occasional poems.[185] Al-Jawāhiri was never completely free of this early trend, and his revolution , achieved to a great degree on the political and social spheres, never imposed on him the necessity of purifying poetry and literature in general of the unsavoury attitude of the eulogist and the flatterer.[186] His poems of occasion, moreover, were sometimes, although not always, forced and lacking in the usual intensity and charged power of his better poems. 'Abbūd, hearing him

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* Namely Badawi al-Jabal (Muḥammad Sulaimān al-Aḥmad) and Adunīs ('Ali Aḥmad Sa'īd).

declaim a poem at the memorial celebration of a Lebanese leader was quite disheartened and expressed his regret and revulsion at that poem which he found too prosaic and of a lower level than that of al-Jawāhiri's other poetry.[187]

Al-Jawāhiri's life, just like his poetry, deeply involved in the political life of modern Iraq and his rise to favour and his loss of prestige with the authorities reflect the many political changes Iraq has known since the 1920 revolution.[188] He has issued many collections of poetry, the first being Baina 'l-Shu'ūr wa 'l-'Āṭifah (1928) and the second Dīwān al-Jawāhiri (1935). In 1949, however, he re-organized his poems and published them in three volumes (I: 1949; II: 1950; and III: 1953) all three entitled also Dīwān al-Jawāhiri. A selection of his poems was published in Damascus in 1957 again under the same title. A last diwan, Barīd al-Ghurbah, which is a collection of poems written mostly after al-Jawāhirī left Iraq as ambassador to Prague in the early sixties was published in 1965 probably at Prague.

At its worst, al-Jawāhiri's poetry can be forced, too long winded and difficult to understand because of his use of unfamiliar Classical words and complicated sentence formation. At its best it has a superior quality of tone, (ardent and often explosive); of image, (vivid and often terrifying); and of intensity and compression. He was able to set the rhythm of poetry in powerful but harmonious action. In his best poems, the reader, but especially the listener, is uplifted on an emotional surge. Although powerfully in the Classical tradition, he succeeded in pervading the whole of his material with some special qualities of his own. The following example is interesting. It is very Classical in form, diction and strength of texture, and yet it is unique and is not reminiscent of any former Classical poet:

189

اطبق دجى ، اطبق ضباب اطبق جهاما يا سحاب
اطبق دخان من الضمير محرقا ، اطبق عذاب
اطبق دمار على حماة دمارهم ، اطبق تباب
اطبق جزاء على بناة قبورهم اطبق عقاب
اطبق نعيب يجيب صداه البوم اطبق يا خراب
اطبق على متلبدين شكا خمولهم الذباب
لم يعرفوا لون السماء لفرط ما انحنت الرقاب

This is a remarkably individual technique of great poetic value. In it, as in most of his better poems, he is immediately Classical and modern. Only one other modern Arab poet has been able to arrive at such Classical heights: the Syrian Badawi al-Jabal, whose poetry, however, differs radically in texture and tone. But both poets display a genius a thousand years old; they are not slavish followers of the Classical tradition, they are masters of it, living at its very heart.

Despite some unsuccessful occasions, al-Jawāhiri is a master of the platform. He has proved, in his better examples, that the poem of occasion can be directed upon an externalised experience and yet retain its own poetic value. His rendering of the emotion is very explicit, and the communal spirit is so well captured by him that there is no dividing line between his personal agony or joy and that of his audience. His poem "Akhī Ja'far" on his brother, who was killed in the Iraqi revolution of 1948, is a good example of this:

190

اخي" جعفرا" لا اقول الخيال وذو الثأر يقظان لا يحلم
ولكن بما الهم الصابرون وقد يقرأ الغيب مستلهم
ارى افقا بذجيم الدماء تنوّر واختفت الانجم
وحبلا من الارض يرقى به كما قذف الصاعد السلم
. . . . . .
وجيلا يروح وجيلا يجيء ونارا ازاءهما تضرم

This is the magic power with which al-Sayyāb and his generation grew up. It changed in al-Sayyāb into a long wail of agonised protest, but in al-

Jawāhiri the feverish, suffocated expressions have a violence uniquely their own. His is the most virile poetic expression in modern Arabic poetry. He has captured, not only the emotional but also the spiritual experiences of his people and his poetry often revolves around the very point of crisis.

What were al-Jawāhiri's poetic achievements? His form had remained directly Classical: the two-hemistich line and the monorhyme. An attempt at changing this pattern in his long poems "Anetta"[191] and "Aphrodite"[192] was unsuccessful. They lack al-Jawāhiri's magnificent sweep and high quality.[193] "Anetta" for example, is made up of stanzas of dissimilar pattern but of equal hemistichs of al-khafīf metre repeated all through. The rhyme pattern, however, varies from one stanza to another: e.g.

1st stanza: aaa bb a cccc aaa dd ee.

Such a pattern sounds, to the ear of the reader, rather artificial with connotations that suggest the light topic of al-muwashshah with its flow of simple words. This is why the frequent difficult words, and the seriousness of tone with which al-Jawāhiri treats his subject matter do not seem suited to it. Indeed the deep seriousness of tone in all al-Jawāhiri's poetry needed and was given a pattern that had been used by all serious poets before him: the two hemistich form and the monorhyme. Between this Classical form and the lighter one of al-muwashshah or any similar form, the choice for al-Jawāhiri had to be definitely the first. It must be asserted here that this form, although highly traditional, was still alive and full of vitality. / The form of Arabic poetry, in serious examples had never developed far away from its best Classical patterns, until the late forties of this century.* Whatever was invented or discovered of variations in form were added to it and did not supersede it. The revivalists of the modern poetic renaissance took all of these forms at once and revitalised them.

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* The drastic patterns in some Muwashshah forms and reasons why the present writer does not regard them as a part of a poetic revolution in form will be discussed in the section on form in the 7th chapter.

The answer to the question lies, one feels, in several other factors. Firstly, in this very ardent seriousness where there is no trace whatsoever of the niceties and trivialities which afflicted the major part of the nineteenth century poetry. On the contrary, his serious tone is carried to the extreme, a solid foundation for the poetry of rejection and anger of a later period.

Secondly, the emotional sweep of his verse was the final liberating force in a poetry that had long suffered from emotional insincerity. It was also a liberating force for the spirit of the generation and served as a catharsis for the suffocating undercurrents of Arab life. Probably in al-Jawāhiri's poetry we have a central contribution that has prepared the Iraqi people emotionally for the advent and the eruption of revolution. This, however, is out of the scope and the direct purpose of this work.

Thirdly, the emotional jets of al-Jawāhiri's poetry give it a rhythmic power of an intensity that suits his peculiar type of angry exhortations. His rhythmical technique was to be exploited fully by the following generation and utilised into a freer form of verse. It was al-Sayyāb who was destined to be the greatest heir of this Classical strength in al-Jawāhiri's rhythms. His genius exploited them in the new form of free verse, giving free verse, right from the start, a solid basis on which to build its diversified rhythmic variations.

Fourthly, al-Jawāhiri's poetic diction is rich and carefully chosen. He is highly aware of the importance of the poetic word: "The appropriate and explicit word is the /result of/ a very hard and painful struggle, a rigorous discipline,...a deep perception and a poignant sensibility..."[194] In his opinion, it is the poetic word which decides whether any of us is an artist or not.[195] An Arab poet, moreover, can never create good Arabic verse unless he first studied thoroughly the Classical poets and learnt their poetic diction and technique.[196] In this he is intuitively right, although his own experiment has sometimes shown more affinities with the

language of the Classical poets than was necessary. Examples of his use of difficult, even obsolete Classical words are many in his poetry.[197] But the general quality of his words is selective, and he can charge them with an effective power that lends strength and poignancy to his poetry. In fact al-Jawāhiri supplied Arabic poetry with a new poetic idiom in which many words are used denoting violence as an element of Arab life as he depicts it, words like blood, death, storm, fire, victims, martyrs, poison, hunger, cloud, fog, revolution etc.[198] This poetic idiom was exploited to the full in platform poetry accompanying the different Arab revolutions in the fifties, but it also crept in an oblique manner into the poetry of many avant garde poets, especially al-Sayyāb.

Fifthly, the emotional surge and the bouncing rhythms are supported by a peculiar tone which, although found in lesser dimensions in some of al-Raṣāfi's verse, creates a particular atmosphere. It varies from a tone of terrifying anger in his national poems, to a tone of earnest involvement in his love poems, so earnest that the image of death often creeps into it:

اميلـــي بصدرك نبـــع الحيـــاة	وخلي فما ظامئـــا يرشـــــف
أميلـــي ،فينبـــوع هذا الجمـــال	الى أن يســـتنـــزف
وهذا الشباب الطليـــق العنـــان	سيكبح منه ويستوقـــــف
اميلـي فسيف غد مصلـــت	علينا ، وسمع القضا مرهـــف
عدى ، ثم لا تخلفي ،فالحمـــام	صنوك في العنف لا يخلـــف

199

The terrifying anger in his own national poetry was to become a constant tone in later poetry, which the avant garde poets were to exploit, prompted both by the mood of the age and probably by this fine example of 'angry' poetry supplied by al-Jawāhiri.

Finally, al-Jawāhiri's superior genius showed itself in his poetic images. The old simile with its direct, flat implications, is less used. Instead there is this modern growth towards a pictorial image often of very fine and impressive quality, supported by an emotional intensity.[200] Witness this image of death:

201

انا ابغض الموت اللئيم وطيفه بغضي طيوف مخاتل نصّاب
يهب الردى شيخوختي ويقيتها بكهولتي ويقيتها بشبابي
ذئب ترصدني وفوق نيوبه دم اخوتي واقاربي وصحابي

The following is a famous verse:

202 اتعلم ام انت لا تعلم بان جراح الضحايا فم

The same poem has several other impressive images:

203 ارى افقا بنجيع الدماء تنور واختفت الانجم
وحبلا من الارض يرقى به كما قذف الصاعد السلم
....
وكفا تمدّ وراء الحجاب فترسم في الافق ما ترسم

There has been a direct neglect of al-Jawāhiri's contribution by the avant garde critics of recent years. This stems from a misunderstanding of constant values in poetry, as well as from a clouded picture of the possibility that some poetic achievement of value was in fact accomplished in the third and fourth decades in Iraq; for it is possible that these critics link achievement merely with innovation and therefore find by comparison with, say al-Mahjar poetry, that Iraqi poetry does not show similar experimentation. However, what was taking place in al-Mahjar during the early decades of this century was impossible to achieve successfully in Iraq at the time, in view of the Iraqi poetic heritage, the entrenchment of a healthier sort of Classicism in it and the relative slowness with which Western influences were infiltrating the literary consciousness there.[204] We have seen that attempts at premature innovation were unsuccessful in countries where the entrenched Classicism was still strong and had direct influences in literary circles. Al-Raṣāfi and al-Zahāwi, and after them al-Ṣāfi, when they attempted new spheres of experience, were not always able to give to their poetry a strong and solid phraseology but brought many flaws into modern Arabic poetry. Al-Jawāhiri's genius saved the situation for poetry in Iraq by this magnificent achievement of a poetry

reflecting the spirit of the age, and the aspirations of the people while remaining remarkably powerful in texture, phraseology and emotional energy. Moreover, it helped to save Iraqi poetry in the thirties and forties from falling prey to the new unsuccessful experiments that were then taking place in Egypt, and in fact only the better Egyptian poets of the time had any effect at all on the contemporary Iraqi poetry.[205] These, who included ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā and Maḥmūd Ḥassan Ismāʿīl, were Romantic poets. Their influence and that of al-Mahjar poetry[206] caused a flourish of Romantic poetry in the forties in Iraq, taken on temporarily by very young poets who later became leaders in a wide avant garde movement in contemporary Arabic poetry. These included Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, Nāzik al-Malāʾikah and ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyāti whose services later to Arabic poetry cannot be over-estimated. If the immediate heritage of these poets were to be explored with a view to studying the sources of their strength, it would be found that the diversified contribution of two generations of modern poets in Iraq was behind that strength. But it will be found that al-Jawāhiri's confirmation of the Classical tradition was a central support. It did not only throw into the background some previous unsuccessful experiments in modern Iraqi poetry such as those naively attempted by al-Zahāwi and al-Raṣāfi, but it also kept away premature innovations and furnished the younger generation of avant garde poets in Iraq with a firm basis on which to build.

But the Iraqis of the thirties and forties were not really aware of the strength of their position in poetry. They were really very dependent on Egypt for literary nourishment. A writer, writing in 1936 exclaims that "Literature is at its worst in the country of the two rivers [Iraq] and Baghdad, which was..[the centre of literature and culture] now

awaits the weekly mail to snatch the Egyptian periodicals and nourish itself with Egyptian literature."[207] Thirteen years later another writer confirms this complaint, and refers to the comments of the first writer. "The voices of writers and poets have become silent in the land of the two rivers," he insists.[208] This is rather strange, because he is writing in December, 1949, after the movement of free verse had been launched. The high regard of Egypt's name in Iraq has been further described by Zaki Mubārak, the Egyptian writer who spent an academic year in Iraq in 1937,[209] and who became enchanted with the Iraqi love of poetry[210] and open mindedness in literature,[211] as well as by their great appreciation of Egyptian literature.[212] He wrote several books on Iraq and its people. With a stern voice he chides Egyptian men of letters for the self-centred attitude which he only realised, it seems, when he met with the great liberality of Iraqi men of letters. He insists that the monopoly of literary leadership by Egypt might do the Egyptian literature more harm than good, for "it would create faults the smallest of which would be boastful pride and an over-confidence that there can never be anything better."[213] He continues by saying that "these faults have begun to appear...for the Egyptians are pre-occupied with their own culture, which has widened and become diversified, and do not look at what the people of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine etc. are creating."[214] This, he insists, will keep them in ignorance of the development of life in countries which are alive and progressing.[215]

Zaki Mubārak's description of literary activity in Iraq,[216] although it confirms the interest the Iraqis had in Egyptian literary output at that time, gives a picture of an environment fertile with the promise of imminent authentic creativity.[217] A latent fertility was awaiting the opportunity to assert itself. It had laid itself open to influences, but it was finally able to prove its inherent authentic currents and its correct artistic intuition when it took only what was vital and worthwhile in the extrinsic currents which were making themselves felt in Iraq.

FOOTNOTES

1. Dīwān al-Kāẓimi, Shā'ir al-'Arab, n.p., n.d., the introduction to the diwan by al-Sheikh Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Razzāq, p.6.

2. Ibrāhīm al-Sāmarrā'i, Lughat al-Shi'r Bain Jīlain, Beirut, n.d. /but definitely after 1960/, pp.27-43. See also Mahdi al-Bīr, Al-Kāẓimi, Baghdad, 1961, pp.20, 22-4.

3. For examples of this poetry see I. al-Wā'ili, Al-Shi'r al-Siyāsi 'l-'Irāqi fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsi' 'Ashar, pp.152-3, 155, 157, 159, 171, 172, 173 et passim.

4. See Dīwān al-Kāẓimi, pp.60-1.

5. See ibid., an article by al-'Aqqād on him which shows that they were well acquainted with each other.

6. Ibid., p.11.

7. Al-Sāmarrā'i, op.cit., p.27.

8. Dīwān al-Kāẓimi, p.212.

9. See Sāmarrā'i, op.cit., pp.39-40.

10. On the Bedouin qualities of his culture, see ibid., pp.31-9; al-'Aqqād, in Dīwān al-Kāẓimi, p.15.

11. Al-Sāmarrā'i pays attention to this important point of educational background when he talks of al-Kāẓimi, op.cit., p.27.

12. Ibid. See also al-Bīr, op.cit., p.24; on al-Ṭabāṭabā'i see al-Wā'ili, op.cit., pp.263-4.

13. See ibid., p.264.

14. Dīwān al-Kāẓimi, pp.327-8.

15. For a more detailed discussion of al-Kāẓimi's poetic diction see al-Sāmarrā'i, op.cit., pp.27-43.

16. See for example his poem "Wa Laisa Siwākum Ayyuha 'l-'Urbu lī Fakhru", Dīwān al-Kāẓimi, pp.191-6, in eulogy of Emir 'Abdullah ibn al-Ḥusain.

17. Ibid., p.256.

18. 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Hilāli, Al-Shā'ir al Thā'ir Muhammad Bāqir al-Shabībi, Baghdad, 1965, pp.27-9.

19. 'Abbūd, Mujaddidūn, p.144; M. Ismā'īl, "Malāmiḥ min al-Shi'r al-'Irāqi 'l-Ḥadīth", Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.50.

20. 'Abbūd, Mujaddidūn, p.150.

21. Ibid., p.149.

22. See the introduction to his diwan, Dīwān al-Shabībi, Cairo, 1940.

23. For a detailed account of his life and political struggle see al-Hilāli, op.cit.

24. Ibid., p.12, from an introduction by the poet to al-Hilāli's book; also his introduction to his own dīwān, op.cit.

25. Dīwān al-Shabībi, p.137.

26. Ismā'īl, loc.cit.

27. Ibid.; al-Sāmarrā'i, op.cit., p.65.

28. Dīwān al-Shabībi, loc.cit.

29. Ibid., p.143; for al-Shabībi's Classical affinities see al-Sāmarrā'i, op.cit., pp.57-68.

30. Ibid., p.135.

31. Ismā'īl, loc.cit.

32. The following statement appears on the first page:
"The author has omitted some verses from his poems which he had published under a pseudonym in the most famous Egyptian papers during the days when tyranny was very severe." In 1908 the Constitution was granted by the Ottoman Sultan and the political conditions were temporarily relaxed.

33. As an example of these see his treatise "Al-Daf' al-'Ām wa 'l-Ẓawāhir al-Ṭabī'iyyah wa 'l-Falakiyyah", published in A. al-Rashūdi, Al-Zahāwi, Dirāsāt wa Nusūs, Beirut, 1966, pp.127-52, originally published in Al-Muqtaṭaf, 1912, Vol.41, i, 26-34, ii, 113-7 & iii, 221-6; see also his treatise "Al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabi 'l-Jadīd" in al-Rashūdi, op.cit., pp.81-9, originally published in Al-Muqtaṭaf, 1896, Vol.XX, x, 738-52; the editors of Al-Muqtaṭaf published it later in a booklet and distributed it as a gift to its readers; see H. Nāji, Al-Zahāwi wa Dīwānuhu 'l-Mafqūd, Cairo, 1963, p.53.

34. See B.A. Ṭabānah, Ma'rūf al-Rasāfi, Dirāsah Adabiyyah li Shā'ir al-'Irāq wa Bī'atihi 'l-Siyāsiyyah wa 'l-Ijtimā'iyyah, Cairo, 1947, pp.36-7.

35. Ibrāhīm al-Durūbi has written an interesting and painstaking book entitled Al-Baghdādiyyūn, Akhbāruhum wa Majālisuhum, Baghdad, 1958, in which he traces the cultural traditions of many prominent families in Baghdad and speaks about their social and literary salons. He speaks of the old and new schools of learning in the city. See pp.30-2 on al-Jamīl family; pp.44-5 on the salon of A. al-Akhras; pp.45-6 on that of al-Sheikh Ş. al-Tamīmi; pp.110-2 on that of al-Raṣāfi and pp.203-5 on that of al-Zahāwi.

36. See ibid., pp.111, 112, 114, 204 and 388-9; see M.M. al-Jawāhiri, "Dhikrayāt 'an al-Zahāwi", Al-Adīb al-'Irāqi, Baghdad, No.3, May-June, 1961, pp.7-25; see on pp.16-8 his interesting description of al-Zahāwi's literary circle in Cafe Rashīd on the Tigris; see also p.35 of a letter by al-Zahāwi to an Egyptian writer, written in 1932, published in al-Rashūdi, op.cit., pp.28-44.

37. For a discussion of the role of this generation of Iraqi poets as social reformers and political spokesmen see 'Abd al-Karīm al-Dujaili, Al-Shi'r al-'Irāqi 'l-Ḥadīth, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1959, pp.39-128; also Y. 'Izziddīn Poetry and Iraqi Society 1900-1945, Baghdad, 1962, which has six chapters on social problems, the influence of occupation, the emancipation of women, rural problems, education and poverty; see also his more detailed books Al-Shi'r al-'Irāqi 'l-Ḥadīth, wa Athar al-Tayyārāt al-Siyāsiyyah wa 'l-Ijtimā'iyyah fīh, Baghdād, 1960; on the national trend see 'Umar al-Daqqāq, Al-Ittijāh al-Qawmi; also A.K. Maqdisi, Ittijāhat, pp.162-9 et passim.

38. See Jamīl Sa'īd, Nazarāt fi 'l-Tayyārāt al-Adabiyyah al-Ḥadīthah fi 'l-'Iraq, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1954, pp.77-8, where he describes the differences between the feelings of pity in al-Raṣāfi and the feelings of rebellion in M.S. Bahr al-'Ulūm with regards the poor peasantry; see also ibid., pp.87-8 for the difference in the attitude of these two poets to prison life; al-Raṣāfi weeps for the prisoners; Bahr al-'Ulūm and al-Jawāhiri find prison life an honour; see also 'Izziddīn, Al-Shi'r al-'Irāqi 'l-Ḥadīth, pp.284-7 for the attitude of different periods towards poverty.

39. For this see a general description of Arabic poetry and its Islamic and Oriental relations in al-Daqqāq, op.cit., pp.35-104; also al-Maqdisi, op.cit., pp.15-28 and pp. 36-9.

40. See Al-Zahāwi's letter to the Egyptian writer, op.cit., p.33, where he says that the Ottomans appointed him in high office to win his silence.

41. Ibid., pp.42-3.

42. See Y. Izziddīn, Al-Zahāwi, al-Shā'ir al-Qalig, a short study on the poet published as part of a booklet entitled Ārā' fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi, Baghdad, 1962, pp.26-7 and 28-9.

43. For al-Zahāwi's restlessness concerning his position with the different authorities see ibid., pp.24-36. However, 'Izziddīn mixes up his dates and conclusions, for he refers al-Zahāwi's scientific writings to the failure to accomplish his ambitions in the twenties (p.30), an incorrect assumption because al-Zahāwi wrote these at the outset of the century and earlier. (See al-Rashūdi, op.cit., pp.155, 162, 185, 186) . . . Another point which 'Izziddīn's study overlooks is that causes of al-Zahāwi's anxiety go far deeper than mere political ambitions. Firstly his temperament was of a particularly over-anxious nature. (See his description of himself as a child in al-Rashūdi, p.118. See also the descritpion of al-Zahāwi's character in al-Jawāhiri, loc.cit.) Secondly, a sensitive and brilliant man like al-Zahāwi had great causes for restlessness during those days. His intellectual aspirations were continously assailed by so many deeply ingrained conventions and al-Zahāwi's life shows clearly the paradoxical existence of all these forces and the constant struggle he underwent between them. Moreover, his spiritual conflict between faith and the rejection of religion is too clear in his works to be overlooked in a paper on the subject of his spiritual anxiety. Another book, more accurately written than 'Izziddīn's is 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Hilāli's Al-Zahāwi baina 'l-Thaurah wa 'l-Sukūn, Beirut, [c.1964]. But it is also a report of al-Zahāwi's political conflict and changeability, and in it, too, there is no realisation of the conflict between traditional hangovers and modern aspirations. See pp.36-8 for a poignant example of al-Zahāwi's quick reactions to liberal attitudes of thinking as exemplified by a Westerner.

44. Such as H. Nāji, op.cit., and al-Rashūdi, op.cit.

45. See his detailed reply to a questionnaire addressed to him in 1933, al-Rashūdi, op.cit., pp.54-68, which gives a resumé of his ideas on life, science, religion, politics, morals, traditions, poetry, women, etc. For a single example of his daring, he said on p.68 "I like the religion of freedom from religion" and "The authority of religion is weakening slowly and will vanish in a few centuries."

46. In his letter to the Egyptian writer, op.cit., p.36, he says that he was the first to fight the tyranny of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd. See also Nāji, op.cit., p.29. See also his poems "Ḥattāma Tughfilu", Al-Kalam al-Manzūm, published with his Rubā'iyyāt in a volume entitled Dīwān Jamīl Ṣidqi 'l-Zahāwi, ed. M.Y. Najm, Cairo, 1955, pp.7-10; his poem "Anīn al-Mufāriq" pp.10-13; his poem "Al-Zulmu Yaqtulunā" pp.63-5; see also his section, "Wahy al-Ḍamīr" pp.272-304 of his collection Dīwān al-Zahāwi, Cairo, 1924, etc.

47. See his section on women, ibid., pp.306-18; see also his most famous poem "Mazziqī ya Ibnata 'l-'Irāqi 'l-Ḥijābā" in Al-Lubāb, Baghdad, 1928, pp.335-9. See also the speech of A. Shahbandar at al-Zahāwi's memorial ceremony entitled "Al-Zahāwi wa 'l-Mar'ah", in al-Rashūdi, op.cit., pp.387-90; see also Nāji, op.cit., pp.163-5.

48. See his letter to the Egyptian writer, op.cit., pp.37-8.

49. Ibid., p.38.

50. Najm calls him a pioneer of scientific thinking, Dīwān Jamīl Ṣidqi al-Zahāwi, the introduction; for a single example of his method see his article on race-horses based on experimentation and observation, al-Rashūdi, op.cit., pp.91-104.

51. See his letter, op.cit., p.44.

52. See his amusing anecdote in the Ottoman Parliament, ibid., pp.42-3.

53. This is best seen in his Al-Nazaghāt , a collection of poems published lately by Ḥilāl Nāji, op.cit., pp.320-52.

54. See al-Rashūdi, op.cit., pp.46 and 63.

55. See his article, ibid., pp.81-9.

56. Al-'Aqqād wrote about him in 1927 neither putting him among the philosophers, nor among the poets, Sā'āt, p.202; to him al-Zahāwi has a "fine scientific and mathematical talent" only, p.203. Al-'Aqqād is not able to perceive the value of al-Zahāwi's versatility for the cultural progress of his contemporaries.

57. He believed so himself. In his letter, op.cit., p.43, he says "I believe that... fanaticism in Iraq diminished only under the influence of what I published of free philosophic and social ideas." See also Rufā'īl Buṭṭi, Al-Adab al-'Aṣri fi 'l-'Irāq al-'Arabi, Cairo, 1923, I, 5-6; see also Zaki Mubārak, Wahy Baghdād, Cairo, 1938, p.300, where he says the Iraqis told him that al-Zahāwi "led a poetic life and was a leader in artistic matters".

58. Nāji, op.cit., p.9. However, Nāji meant quite another thing. This phenomenon he refers to the idea that with al-Zahāwi poetry had started to link itself with science and philosophy. Nāji tends to believe that this linkage takes place spontaneously in an age of progress and that it is a sign of strength in poetry. When one remembers that Nāji is writing in 1963, one cannot help the astonishment at the lingering of such artistically immature ideas.

59. This is why one cannot agree with A.G. Karam when he regards al-Zahāwi among the poets of Shauqi's generation who did not add to the cultural wealth of the nation, "Madkhal", p.242, and n.

60. These are Al-Kalam al-Manẓūm, Rubā'iyyāt al-Zahāwi, Beirut, 1924; Dīwān al-Zahāwi; Al-Lubāb, Baghdad, 1928 and Al-Awshāl, Baghdad, 1934.

61. It is Al-Thumālah, Baghdad, 1939.

62. See the discussion by Nāji on the authenticity of the manuscript of this diwan, which discussion sounds quite plausible, op.cit., pp. 313-9.

63. Al-Sāmarra'i, op.cit., p.47.

64. His insistence was more on the need of education and progress; see his section on society in Dīwān al-Zahāwi, pp.264-72, and on women, referred to above, footnote 47, p.352.

65. A few examples of these would suffice; see his poem "Naẓrah fi 'l-Nujūm", ibid., pp.155-6; and "Waṣf al-Majarrah", ibid., pp.135-44.

66. M. Ismā'īl, his essay, op.cit., Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.50.

67. The following verses are famous:
لم يكن مبدأ البساطة في الشعر معلنا
انا من بعد اعصر انا اعلنته انا
Al-Lubāb, p.163. See also Ismā'īl, loc.cit; al-Sāmarrā'i, op.cit., pp.47-51.

68. See his autobiographical article, "Ḥayāti", al-Rashūdi, op.cit., pp.118-26; the above reference is on p.118.

69. Ibid., p.197; Buṭṭi, in Al-Adab al-'Aṣri, I, 10, says he wrote poetry in Persian.

70. Al-Rashūdi, op.cit., p.31.

71. Dīwān al-Zahāwi, p.309.

72. Ibid., p.338.

73. Ibid., p.398.

74. For more on this see al-Sāmarrā'i, op.cit., pp.48-51.

75. See ibid., p.48.

76. Although he did recognise their innovations, see R. Buṭṭi, Sihr al-Shi'r, Cairo, 1922, p.45.

77. For a single example see Nāji, op.cit., p.322, a small poem entitled "Anta Aḥmaq" in which he denies the whole idea of the creation of the universe.

78. Ibid., p.321.

79. See ibid., Nāji's discussion on his dualism, pp.178-84; see also an article by Māhir Ḥasan Fahmi in Al-Fikr al-Mu'āṣir magazine, No.9, November, 1965, p.75 et seq. . Cf. Al-Rīḥani, Qalb al-'Irāq, Beirut, 1957, pp.241-2.

80. See also what Ismā'īl Adham says on this, quoted by Nāji, op.cit., p.236.

81. On his irony see al-Rīḥāni, Qalb al-'Irāq, p.241; see also his poems entitled "Aba'da mā ana Ablā", in Nāji, op.cit., p.329; and "Allāh", pp.329-9, etc.

82. On this see Buṭṭi, Sihr, pp.25, 26-32; 37-46; Dīwān al-Zahāwi, p. ج

83. See ibid.

84. Ibid., p. ب; Buṭṭi, Sihr, p.24.

85. Ibid.

86. See his book, Qadiyyat al-Shi'r al-Jadīd, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1964, pp.29-38.

87. Buṭṭi, Sihr, p.71; Dīwān, loc.cit.

88. He tried blank verse very early in the century and a poem in blank verse, dated 1323 A.H., most probably the earliest poem in blank verse in this century appeared in Al-Kalām al-Manẓūm (pp.149-55 of the 1955 edition), which is extremely bad. See also another poem in blank verse in Al-Lubāb, pp.280-5 where he declares in an introductory note that he invented blank verse, p.280.

89. Buṭṭi, Sihr, p.25 and 70; see also Dīwān, pp.242, 244, 247, 248, and 256.

90. Buṭṭi, Sihr, p.25; Dīwān, p. ا.

91. Buṭṭi, Sihr, p.25 and 70; Lubāb, p. ا; Dīwān, p.253 where he says about poetry:
يذمون شعرا لا يقلد غيره اولئك اعداء لكل جديد

92. Lubāb, pp. ب - أ

93. Buṭṭi, Siḥr, p.71, Dīwān, p.243.

94. Dīwān, p. ب and 242.

95. Ibid., p. ج

96. Ibid., p.242; Buṭṭi, Siḥr, p.76.

97. Dīwān, p. أ

98. Lubāb, p. ب

99. Many of his poems lacked unity. One flagrant example is his poem in blank verse, mentioned above.

100. See al-Zahāwi's letter, op.cit., pp.36-7; al-Rīḥāni, Qalb al-'Irāq, p.240.

101. Sharārah, Al-Raṣāfi, Beirut, 1960, p.51.

102. See for example his poems "Min ayna wa ilā ayna", Dīwān al-Raṣāfi sixth edition, Cairo, 1959, pp.13-6; also "Al-Arḍ", ibid., pp.27-32; "Alikmī yā ḍiyā'u", ibid., pp.24-7, all three of which appeared in his first diwan.

103. See Ra'ūf al-Wā'iẓ, Ma'rūf al-Raṣāfi, Ḥayātuhu wa Shi'ruhu 'l-Siyāsi, Cairo, n.d. [c.1960],pp.85-6; Buṭṭi, Al-Adab al-'Aṣri, I,67-8.

104. See an interesting article by 'Ajāj Nuwaihid on al-Raṣāfi's life in Jerusalem, in which al-Raṣāfi's fame and eminence at the time are aptly described. Al-Anwār Lebanese daily, No.208, 24th April, 1960.

105. Al-Wā'iẓ, op.cit., p.61, Ṭabānah, op.cit., p.33.

106. Ibid.

107. Ibid., pp.33, 34 and 211; Buṭṭi, Al-Adab al-'Aṣri, I,69-70.

108. Al-Wā'iẓ, op.cit., p.68, 71-2.

109. Sharārah, Al-Raṣāfi, pp.7-8 and 15-16.

110. See 'Ajāj Nuwaihid, loc.cit., on al-Raṣāfi's poem in which he referred kindly to Herbert Samuel, the first High Commissioner in Palestine. This was at Jerusalem in 1920 and it caused him an immediate loss of prestige there; see the poem in Dīwān al-Raṣāfi, sixth edition, pp.429-430.

111. On his political life see al-Wā'iẓ, op.cit., pp.60-90; see also the long argument of al-Wā'iẓ on his political career, ibid., pp.91-101 which aims, however, at proving, in a rather weak argument, that al-Raṣāfi was a real politician.

112. For more on al-Raṣāfi's life and career, see Sharārah, Al-Raṣāfi, pp.35-41; Ṭabānah, op.cit., pp.26-44; see also a profile of him in al-Rīḥāni, Qalb al-'Iraq, pp.250-5.

113. Ibid.

114. 'Izziddīn, Al-Shi'r al-'Irāqi 'l-Ḥadīth, p.280; al-Wā'iẓ, op.cit., p.60.

115. Ibid., pp.61-2.

116. See for example his poem on the orphan "Al-Yatīm al-Makhdū'", Dīwān al-Raṣāfi, pp.158-9; and his poem on the Baghdad prison "Al-Sijn fī Baghdād", ibid., pp.42-6.

117. See his section on women's progress, ibid., pp.342-54.

118. See for example his poem "Ila 'l-'Ummāl", ibid., pp.178-80; also a poem entitled "Mu'tarak al-Ḥayāt", ibid., pp.36-9, especially p.37.

119. He has many poems on this theme among which are "Al-Faqr wa 'l-Suqām", ibid., pp.94-102; and his famous poem "Al-Yatīm fī 'l-'Īd", see also 'Izziddīn, Al-Shi'r al-'Irāqi 'l-Ḥadīth, pp.280-2; J. Sa'īd, op.cit., pp.73 and 74.

120. His poems against ignorance and squalor are also numerous. See Dīwān al-Raṣāfi, the section entitled"Ijtimā'iyyāt", pp.52-4; 74-5; 85-6; 87-8; 88-90; 91-2; 146-7; 157-8; etc.

121. See a book by Hilāl Nāji, Al-Qaumiyyah wa 'l-Ishtirākiyyah fī Shi'r al-Raṣāfi, Beirut, 1959, in which al-Raṣāfi's nationalistic and social trends are followed. The book is interesting though over-enthusiastic, exaggerating the idealogical basis of al-Raṣāfi's social attitudes.

122. See his diwan entitled Al-'Awāṭif, Najaf,1937; on him see Jamīl Sa'īd, op.cit., pp.77-8, 79, 80, 87-8.

123. Quoted by al-Dujaili, op.cit., p.81 and others.

124. Ibid., p.77; 'Izziddīn, Al-Shi'r al-'Irāqi 'l-Ḥadīth, p.282.

125. Dīwān al-Raṣāfi, pp.423-5, from a poem in welcome of al-Rīḥāni on his visit to Iraq.

126. Two interesting if artistically bad examples are his poems "Al-Ḥayāt al-Ijtimā'iyyah wa 'l-Ta'āwun", ibid., pp.82-3 and "Ila 'l-'Ummāl" in which he naively says on p.178:

ان يطب في حياتنا الاجتماعية عيش فالفضل للعمال

Early socialist ideas are already infiltrating the Iraqi society. With al-Raṣāfi they are still naive and simple, tinged rather with a religious colour.

127. Books like those of al-Wā'iẓ, op.cit., and Hilāl Nāji's Al-Qaumiyyah wa 'l-Ishtirākiyyah fī Shi'r al-Raṣāfi, which are completely devoted to him, and other books which discuss general topics in poetry like those of 'Izziddīn, al-Dujaili and Jamīl Sa'īd on Iraqi poetry, mentioned above; and like those of al-Daqqāq, Al-Ittijāh al-Qaumi, and al-Maqdisi Ittijāhāt on Arabic literature in general.

128. For example, Sharārah, Al-Raṣāfi, pp.47, 48, 50 and 52. He says on p.52: "You can in all cases write in prose what al-Raṣāfi says in poetry and in a clearer, more concise and more beautiful way."

129. M. Ismā'īl, al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.50.

130. Dīwān al-Raṣāfi, p.103.

131. For examples of this see al-Sāmarrā'i, op.cit., pp.72-8. They are numerous in his diwan; see also Ṭabānah, op.cit., pp. 200 and 206-9.

132. Dīwān al-Raṣāfi, p.455.

133. Ibid., pp.420-3; for a further discussion on this see al-Sāmarrā'i, op.cit., pp.78-80.

134. An example of his naivity is his poem "al-Funūn al-Jamīlah" Dīwān, pp.80-82, in which he discusses the different arts in a didactic and prosaic fashion. Another is his other poem "Al-'Ālam Shi'r", ibid., pp.6-12.

135. Ibid., p.110.

136. Ibid., p.191.

137. Ibid., p.264.

138. Ibid., p.178.

139. 'Ala 'l Miḥakk , p.100.

140. See ibid., pp.94-100, where 'Abbūd criticises him for the many poems he declaimed on a tour taken with an Iraqi delegation in 1936 to Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. 'Abbūd calls this poetry 'ugly' (p.98).

141. Ismā'īl, op.cit., p.49.

142. Mamdūḥ Ḥaqqi, in his small book Ma'rūf al-Raṣāfi, Beirut, 1964, enumerates some of his faults, pp.56-60. He also enumerates what he calls his attributes, pp.45-51. However, Ḥaqqi's ideas stem from a rather conservative background.

143. For a further discussion of al-Raṣāfi's role as a national poet see Al-Ādāb magazine, August, 1953, for an article by Ibrāhīm al-Wā'ili entitled "Al-Raṣāfi baina Tārīkh al-Adab wa Tārīkh al-Siyāsah", pp.35-6.

144. It is interesting to note that fourteen years after al-Raṣāfi's death a memorial celebration was held in his honour in which his role as a national and social poet was highly extolled. A book in which all the speeches and poems delivered at this celebration were collected was published in Baghdad by the Union of Iraqi writers and entitled Mahrajān al-Raṣāfi, Baghdad, 1959.

145. He has always been aware of this conflict, especially with the avant-garde school of the fifties and sixties which advocated, among other things, free verse and a greater compression and terseness. See his poems especially in Al-Shallāl, Beirut, 1962, pp.32, 82-3, 288.

146. See what this publishing firm, Dār al-'Ilm li 'l-Malāyīn, wrote about his popularity on the back cover of Al-Aghwār, second edition, Beirut, 1961. The propaganda is plausible because this publishing firm is known to prefer established authors.

147. Turkī Kāẓim Jaudah, Aḥmad al-Ṣāfi al-Najafī, Ḥayātuhu wa Shi'ruh , Baghdad, 1967, p.43.

148. Ibid., p.45.

149. Ibid., pp.25-35.

150. Ibid., p.48; for more on his life see I. 'Abd al-Sattār, 'Abqariyyat al-Ṣāfi, Tripoli, 1953, pp.5-18.

151. For a long discussion on al-Ṣāfi's poetic diction see al-Sāmarrā'ı, op.cit., pp.83-102.

152. See his interesting poem "Ṣāḥib Maqhā", Al-Amwāj, fourth edition, Beirut, 1961, pp.216-8.

153. His poem "Aṣbaḥtu Ḥurran", ibid., pp.232-3.

154. His poem "Inna 'l-Niyāma yasū'uhā 'l-Īqāẓu", ibid., pp.223-4.

155. His poem "Al-Taqdīr ba'da 'l-Maut", ibid., pp.227-9.

156. His verse on seeing some boys selling the Quran, an unacceptable act by the Moslems, ibid., p.291.

157. His poem "Al-'Amā'an al-Sufahā'", Al-Shallāl, p.136.

158. His poems "Ṣāḥib Maqhā", and "Kam min Dukhān", Al-Amwāj, p.112.

159. His harsh but factual poem "Jiwār al-Faqīr", ibid., pp.102-4.

160. His poem "Al-Idhā'āt", ibid., pp.187-9; and his poem "Lā taqtulū 'l-Adabā," ibid., p.228.

161. 'Ala 'l-Mihakk, p.54 and other places; Dimaqs, p.129; also Ilyās Abū Shabakah as quoted by Jaudah, op.cit., p.100.

162. He says on this فماقلت قولا لم اكن فيه مؤمنـــا, Al-Shallāl, p.269.

163. See for example his poems "Waḥdah", Al-Amwāj, pp.35-40; "Al-Lail wa al-Humūm", ibid., pp.175-7; "Safīnatu 'l-'Umr", Al-Shallāl, pp.66-7; and his beautiful, heart-breaking poem "Waḥshah", written on his sixtieth birthday and published in Al-Lafaḥāt, his ninth collection.

164. Al-Sayyāb as quoted by Jaudah, op.cit., p.104 and Abū Shabakah as quoted by him, ibid., p.99 and as quoted on the back-cover of Al-Amwāj, fourth edition.

165. Al-Aghwār, p.9.

166. Y. 'Izziddīn, Al-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth, p.276; the poem entitled "Al-Fallāḥ" is published in Al-Amwāj, pp.8-13.

167. He said in his poem "Al-Shi'r al-Multazim":

فقلت اليكم فاتركوني جانبـــا لكم شعراء فاتركوني للشعـــــر
حفظت لكم شعر الحياة منزها عديد النواحي ،رغم مسلكه الوعـــر

Al-Shallāl, pp.164-

168. See for example his poems on the sea, ibid., pp. 43; 54-5; 61; 65 and 66-7.

169. See his poems on birds, ibid., pp.16-7; 30; 60 and 254.

170. Ibid., pp.214 and 221-2.

171. Ibid., pp.18-24; 248 and 256.

172. See his poems "Al-Shā'ir wa 'l-Fa'r", Al-Amwāj, pp.168-70; and "Al-Shā'ir wa 'l-Qiṭṭ", ibid., pp.171-4.

173. Ismā'īl regards him as a renegade of the Najaf school without appreciating the value of his experiment, op.cit., p.51. Aḥmad Abū Sa'd in Al-Ādāb, November 1953, in an article entitled "Sharar, Dīwān Shi'r li Aḥmad al-Ṣafī al-Najafī", finds no virtue at all in the poet; his article is an example of the prejudiced approach of current modernism in criticism.

174. 'Ala 'l-Mihakk, p.44; see his three chapters on him, pp.41-64; see also al-Sāmarrā'i, loc.cit.

175. 'Ala 'l-Mihakk, p.49.

176. Al-Aghwār, pp.17-8, from a poem entitled "Al-Tanāqud", pp.17-9.

177. Ashi'ah Mulawwanah, Sidon-Beirut, n.d., p.18.

178. Dujaili, op.cit., p.169.

179. Ibid; see also al-Sāmarrā'i, op.cit., p.116 for his memorising a great part of Classical poetry.

180. M. Ismā'īl, op.cit., p.53.

181. See also ibid.

182. Ismā'īl, ibid.

183. Ibid., p.52; Dujaili, op.cit., pp.166 and 180.

184. Dujaili, op.cit., p.172, describes an early collection by al-Jawāhiri entitled Halabat al-Adab, published at Baghdad, 1341 A.H. which contains simple poems of mu'āradah of a number of other famous Classical and modern poets.

185. See for example a book entitled Al-Filasṭīniyyāt, published at al-Najaf, 1939, which shows the importance of 'occasions' in modern Arabic poetry. Al-Jawāhiri has two poems in this collection pp.2-3 and p.15. These and the rest of the poems in the collection are poems written on Palestine on the occasion of the visit of the General Islamic Conference on Palestine to al-Najaf in 1933.

186. Witness his address to ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāṣim at the Memorial celebration of al-Raṣāfi in 1959, Mahrajān al-Raṣāfi, pp.17-18 & 27, in fine prose. However, he made of Qāṣim a genius whose light engulfed everyone!

187. Dimaqs wa Urjuwān, pp.58-9. The poem is entitled "ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Karāmah" and is published in his anthology Dīwān al-Jawāhiri, Baghdad, 1953, III, 132-47. However, ʿAbbūd here has been too harsh on the poet, for this poem has some of al-Jawāhiri's most memorable verses, and one feels inclined to disagree with the critic's denouncement of this particular poem, a denouncement probably induced by the exaggerated length of the poem and its rhetorical quality.

188. On this see al-Dujaili, op.cit., pp.178-80; 181; 183-90; 200; 212-3; 215.

189. Dīwān al-Jawāhiri, fourth edition, Damascus, 1957, p.187.

190. Ibid., pp.173-9.

191. Dīwān al-Jawāhiri, Baghdad, 1950, II, 199-234.

192. Dīwān al-Jawāhiri, fourth edition, 1957, pp.51-64.

193. He repeated these experiments in his later poetry published in Barīd al-Ghurbah, but without success; see for a single example his poem of dedication, pp. ز – و, written at Prague in 1965.

194. Al-Jawāhiri, as quoted by al-Sāmarrā'i, op.cit., p.116.

195. Ibid.

196. Ibid., pp.116-7.

197. For examples of these see ibid., pp.118-24, and 126.

198. These appear often in his poetry and it is unnecessary to give more of them than have already appeared in the examples given above.

199. Dīwān al-Jawāhiri, II,47.

200. Ismāʿīl, op.cit., p.53.

201. Mahrajān al-Raṣāfi, p.130.

202. Dīwān al-Jawāhiri, fourth edition, p.173.

203. Ibid., pp.173-9.

204. An Iraqi writer, Salīm Ṭāhā al-Takrīti, writing as late as 1949 complains of the lack of sufficient Western literary influences in Iraq; "Al-Ḥayāt al-Adabiyyah fi 'l-ʿIrāq", Al-Thaqāfah magazine, No. 572, 12th December, 1949, pp.12-3. In fact the younger generation of Iraqi poets had already been studying Western poetic techniques, but their poetry had not yet imposed itself on Arab critics and readers.

205. See Nāzik al-Malā'ikah's assessment of ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā's popularity and her comparison of this with that of Abū Shādi's relative obscurity in the Arab world, Shiʿr ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1964, p.191.

206. Al-Jadāwil of Abū Māḍi, for example, was published twice in 1927 at al-Najaf.

207. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Amīn, "Al-Ḥayāt al-Adabiyyah fī Baghdād", Al-Risālah, No.140, 9th March, 1936, p.383.

208. Salīm Ṭāhā 'l-Takrīti, "Al-Ḥayāt al-Adabiyyah fi 'l-ʿIrāq", Al-Thaqāfah, No.572, 12th December, 1949, p.12.

209. On Zaki Mubārak's stay in Iraq and the welcome he got from Iraqi literary circles and the press see an article by ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ḥilli entitled "Zaki Mubārak fi 'l-ʿIrāq", Al-Aqlām magazine, January, 1965, pp.55-69. Mubārak seems to have stirred quite a good literary activity there.

210. Wahy Baghdād, pp.299.

211. Ibid., pp.299-300.

212. Ibid., pp.299; 400-1 and 402. Amīn Saʿīd in his book Ayyām Baghdād, Cairo, n.d. describes Iraqi life in 1933 and says that the Iraqis imported 12000 books from Egypt every year and 500 books from Syria, pp.213-4.

213. Ibid., p.412.

214. Ibid.

215. Ibid., p.413.

216. See also Zaki Mubārak's articles, "Al-Adab al-ʿArabi 'l-Ḥadīth fi 'l-ʿIrāq", Al-Risālah, No.404, 31st March, 1941, pp.372-6, and "Al-Andiyah al-Adabiyyah fi 'l-ʿIrāq", ibid., No.405, 7th April, 1941, pp.499-502.

217. Wahy Baghdād, pp.294, 299 and 300.

SECTION 3: SYRIA

1: CONSERVATISM

(i) The Kurd 'Ali School

The literary iconoclasts of Egypt and al-Mahjar and the social iconoclasts of Iraq will find no counterparts among their immediate contemporaries in Syria. Here, in the first few decades of this century, we shall see a mild uniformity in an output that is characterised more by correctness of language, a Classical balance of form, emotion and contest rather than by any real creativity. Only one outstanding poet, Badawi al-Jabal, begins to show a different approach and even his best poetry belongs to a slightly later period.

The nineteenth century poetic output in Syria was centred mainly in Aleppo, as has been shown in a previous chapter. It was in this ancient city that a Christian tradition had made itself felt, and where the mild development in literature had been influenced by some foreign links. It was witness to some unusual if not particularly impressive experiments in poetry which, despite a modest aesthetic value, furnished an earlier basis of a modern poetic tradition in Aleppo. This tradition, however, will not be seen to influence very much the poetic development in Damascus in the first decades of this century but indeed will help to produce more original poetry in Aleppo in the thirties and forties. Here the observer can see yet another example of the immense influence of direct literary traditions in shaping the poetic output of any given period.

With the establishment of an Arab government in Damascus in 1918 the cultural activity became centred in the metropolis. Even before that a daily newspaper, al-Muqtabas, founded after the constitution of 1908 by Muhammad Kurd 'Ali (1876-1953) had been leaving its influence on the mind

and spirit of its Arab readers.[1] With the advent of the second decade and the increased political and intellectual awakening of the Arabs, the influence of men like Kurd 'Alı was not only forcibly felt but was also vitally needed. He was an intellectual and a patriot, a progressive and a scholar, and his influence on a small group of Damascene poets during the second decade and later seems to have been very great.[2] He had studied Turkish and French,[3] besides Arabic. This latter language he studied with the famous Sheikhs of Damascus the most prominent of whom was al-Sheikh Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irı.[4] He read Classical books of literature and history as well as Ibn Khaldūn's social philosophy.[5] In Islamic studies he read, besides the Quran, Islamic theology, the traditions and biographies of the Prophet and al-Ṣaḥābah, al-Ghazzālı, Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn al-Jawziyyah and Ibn Taimiyyah.[6] Armed with this versatile education, and with a life already full of experience, voyages and strife,[7] he was to help shape the intellectual tendencies of the small group of educated men round him, among whom were the four poets who were the most prominent among the first generation of Damascene poets in this century.

Kurdish by birth, Kurd 'Alī spent his whole life serving the cause of Arab revivalism in all spheres, but first of all in the linguistic, historical and literary spheres. He was the man whose name was linked, more than that of any other, with the Arab Academy of Language in Damascus, founded largely through his personal initiative and efforts in 1919.[8] Kurd 'Alī was deservedly elected as its president, a position he held until his death.

The Academy's magazine, Majallat al-Majma' al-'Ilmī 'l-'Arabī founded in 1921, was a constant forum in which the Syrian writers and scholars published their works, for it was not a purely linguistic concern,[9] nor was the Academy itself a purely linguistic institution, as was the Academy of Language in Cairo, but served the cause of research in language and literature.[10] Shukri Faiṣal, in his lectures on "Literary

Journalism" rightly insists that it is impossible to divest the literary output of a magazine from the spirit of that magazine in which it is published.[11] It is also relevant that the spirit of this illustrious magazine was one of balance, of patient academic research and of level-headedness. This is indeed a remarkable achievement for this time. A most interesting aspect of this achievement is the fact that it was accomplished quietly without the general ado that accompanied big literary events in al-Mahjar or Egypt.

Reared under the influence of Kurd 'Ali's sustained enthusiasm for research in Classical fields of history, language and literature and also under the influence of Majallat al-Majma' , the first generation of men of letters in Damascus[12] showed the same tendency towards Classicism, and formed with Kurd 'Alī a whole school of thought which al-Kayyālī calls the 'Kurd 'Ali's school of thought'.[13] The cultural revival of Syria during the early decades was coloured by it.[14] The most important of the poets who came under its influence also showed its immense effect on them. These were Khair al-Dīn al-Zirikli (1893-), Muḥammad al-Buzm (1887-1955), Khalīl Mardam Bek (1895-1959) and Shafīq Jabrī (1898-). Their poetry was characterized by a pure terse style and strong meaning; it had a nationalistic tendency and preserved in itself a link with the Classical literature and Arab civilisation in its most illustrious periods.[15]

The direct and indirect links which these four poets had with the Academy and its general spirit is shown in their respective careers. Al-Ziriklī, whose nationalistic activities led him to take refuge in Egypt and other Arab countries,[16] compiled the book of Al-A'lām, in 10 volumes, in which the biographies of notable men and women of Arab history both ancient and modern are briefly recounted. Some Orientalists are also included.[17] In 1930 he was chosen to be a member of the Academy.[18]

Al-Buzm spent his life in linguistic arguments with other interested teachers of Arabic like himself.[19] He is said to have invented a method

of teaching Arabic grammar which made of a difficult subject an interesting adventure for the student,[20] but that he was too indifferent to write it down for posterity.[21] His diwan was published posthumously in 1960 by the Academy of Language in Damascus and was entitled Dīwān Khalīl Mardam.

Mardam Bek, the most scholarly among the four, who edited several valuable Classical books,[22] was elected a member of the Academy in 1925,[23] its secretary in 1941,[24] and its president in 1953.[25]

Jabri, after being chosen later on in his career to be the Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the Syrian University, was invited to be another poet member of the Academy, an honour which he still enjoys.[26] Jabri has not published his diwan yet. In Classical Studies he has several books including a study of the Book of Songs of Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣbahāni, Dīrāsat al-Aghāni, (1951) and another study on Al-Aṣbahāni himself, Abū al-Faraj al-Aṣbahāni, (1955). A third book is Al-Jāhiz (1948).

All these poets, moreover, came from middle class families. Mardam Bek was a rich man all his life.[27] Zirikli, Buzm and Jabri were sons of merchants.[28] This might explain why their rebellion was merely nationalistic, looking more towards a re-achievement of past glory than to a re-assessment of present social conditions. Their influence which began to be felt in the second decade of this century, persisted until the mid-century, and has not yet died away, despite the appearance in the field of diverse poetic talents many of them superior to their own.

But it was not only the influence of Kurd 'Ali's school of thought and their own 'sheltered' social background which decided their trends in poetry. There were several other factors that combined to direct them towards it.

Firstly they could not have studied the Arabic language except by going back to Classical books. Nearly all the men of letters of Damascus who spent their childhood and early youth either in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries had to go for their studies in Arabic to the

Sheikhs.[29] Some of these were highly respectable masters of the language and of Islamic studies and their pupils were taught the best in the Classical heritage.[30]

Another factor was the feeling of national achievement connected with the study of Arabic language and literature. In view of the difficulty of following a persistent course of studies and of finding the right masters,[31] it also seemed a personal adventure. The literary revival in Damascus and other Islamic localities, had of necessity to be a Classical revival as it linked itself first and foremost with Islamic sources of knowledge. Damascus, at the beginning of this century had not yet forged any real links with Western sources of education.[32]

A third factor is the natural tendency of the people of inner Syria to be conservative. Jamīl Ṣalībā describes their hatred of outlandish ways and even of remarkable originality. "The best among them is the one who conforms with his traditions."[33] He asserts further on that "this tendency towards the usual...prompts many intellectuals to keep to a middle course well-trodden by society. They do not surpass the ordinary...and are not liberated from social commitments, a thing which hinders them from any literary or artistic creativity."[34] Like the rest of their contemporaries in the field of poetry these poets were naturally dedicated to a public role, but if an Iraqi public welcomed originality and radicalism, a Syrian public of the first decades was less inclined to do so. We will not meet in the Syria of the first decades any of the original poetic experiments of Iraq, Egypt or al-Mahjar. The metropolis itself did not produce, during the first few decades, any poet of outstanding poetic qualities. But it is equally interesting to note that Syria has not produced, in this century, a single recognised poet who produced really bad poetry. A sober Classical judgment was kept alive, and a respect for Classical perfection has been a basis of strength even for later avant-gardists and innovators, as will be shown presently. Although a large accumulation of

stock phrases and stock attitudes pile up over the years, mainly through the national poetry which was written in abundance, very few poetic works reveal prosaic tendencies or suffer greatly from a weakness of style.

A noticeable similarity among these poets, moreover, is the general uniformity of themes. They all treated a very limited number of subjects. Their most persistent theme was nationalism.[35] Others were descriptive and love poetry. However, the latter theme was less frequently treated.[36] Poems of occasion, which were the fashion all over the Arab world as has already been seen, were also common. But these often managed to introduce the national theme as well. Syria remains one of the greatest strongholds of platform poetry.

This general description of the poetry of four poets who are representative of the first generation of poets in Syria in this century should suffice for the purpose of this paper. However, a further analysis of the conventionalism of such poets has been furnished, unwittingly, by one of them, and it is an opportunity which research should very happily seize upon. In a series of lectures delivered at the Institute of Higher Arabic Studies in Cairo, Jabri describes the process by which he writes a poem. In following this process one sees the conventional mind at work. These lectures indeed provide a most valuable document on the subject of creativity.

When writing a poem, first of all, Jabri says, he looks for the appropriate metre.[37] When he overcomes this 'difficulty' and finds the right metre, he searches about for the rhyme word.[38] Having secured these two he starts work on the first verse, 'al-maṭla‘', which might take him quite a long time to compose.[39] Having succeeded in producing a 'maṭla‘'. the job of composing the whole poem begins.

Jabri now asks this question "How do I compose a poem? How do its images and words come to me?"[40] He declares here that 'words' are very important to him "for words are the secret and spirit of poetry."[41]

Therefore he is "very fond of words" and chooses them carefully.[42] But, he goes on to ask, "how do I, after finding the words for a verse of poetry, find the image?" He answers this by declaring that the words inspire him with the meanings in many cases.[43] "I used to feel that words push the image stored in my mind and bring it out into the open."[44] He gives here an example of this process:

خضـــل الظـــل ،غضـــة اعـــواده ارفيـــف الربيـــع ام اعيـــــاده

The first phrase that came to him in this verse was " خضل الظـــــل ". "This phrase dragged out its sister phrases which are appropriate to it, for there is an ESTABLISHED* connection between ' الخضل ' which is ' الندى ' and between ' الظل ' and ' الغضاضـه ' and ' العـــود '. There is also a connection, equally well-ESTABLISHED* between all these things and ' الاعيـــاد ' and ' الرفيـــف ' and ' الربيـــــع '. All these are harmonious images and when one comes to the mind, the other is SURE* to come. Then they all set themselves harmoniously and in an orderly fashion without the poet feeling how they did it."[45] Again he gives another example:

فكأن النعمان قد حشد العـــــرب وكسرى زاه به ايوانـــــــــه

The word ' النعمـــان ' he says, "inspired me with /the phrase/ ' حشد العـــرب ' and ' حشد العرب ' with the word ' كســـرى ', then the word ' كســـرى ' brought to my mind ' الايـــوان ' and so on..."[46]

In short, he asserts, "Images are stored in the mind waiting to be aroused in order to come out to the tangible and the visible, and it is the 'words' which perform this great function."[47]

Now this is a perfect description of the way stock images and stock phrases are stored up in the mind, waiting comfortably to be recalled by words with connotations that evoke them.

Jabri, moreover, often chooses his words badly, when he releases himself from the grip of stock phrases. He says:

48 فنفضنا عن المرابع ضيمـــا سال فيه النجيع مزنا وسحبـــــا

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* Capital letters mine.

The choice of ' مزنـــا وسحبـــــا ' for blood is unacceptable as an image. There is also an unnecessary repetition of two words with nearly the same meaning: مزنـــا وسحبـــــا. Again this example:

جلـت بالشعر جولة فحسبنـــــا طيف مـروان في النواظر دبـــــا [49]

The use of the word ' دب ', which denotes a rather slow and clumsy way of walking is not fit for a phantom, which is light and ephemeral, especially when it is meant for praise. Despite his special fondness for words and despite the fact that he says that "Poetry cannot exist except when the words are in harmonious relations to one another and form images that suit the meanings they express,"[50] he has not been able to give many original proofs of his own choice of diction.

(ii) Badawi al-Jabal

However, another poet appeared in the twenties who, despite his firm roots in Classicism, did not belong to this group. Muḥammad Sulaimān al-Aḥmad, known as Badawī al-Jabal, (b.1907?),[51] came from the Alawite Mountains of northern Syria where a rather radical form of Shī'ism is practised. The mountains, bordering on the fringes of the beautiful Ladiqyaah coast, are a stronghold of Shī'ah traditions in learning, culture and attributes. Al-Badawi's father, al-Sheikh Sulaimān al Aḥmad, was the religious Imām of the Alawites[52] and a man of learning in Classical Arabic, Islamic and linguistic studies.[53] He later became a member of the Arab Academy of Language in Damascus.[54] His house seems to have been much frequented by students who came to study with him. "They would sleep there, and eat and study with him, as his guests. He spent his whole wealth on this."[55] Sulaimān al-Aḥmad taught his own son and trained him in the best traditions of the Classics especially the anthologies of al-Sharīf al-Raḍi and his student, Mihyār al-Dailamī, as well as Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arri, Abū Tammām, al-Mutanabbi and al-Buḥturi. Al-Badawi also read the Quran, and Nahj al-Balāghah, which had a profound influence on him,[56] as well as the books of al-Jāḥiẓ, and Al-Aghānī.[57]

As a young man Al-Badawī went to Damascus. In 1925 he published his first anthology of poems which seems to have been well received,[58] despite the fact that it contained poems of occasion of uncertain value.[59] However, al-Badawi's poetic talent, detected in the conventional verses, was immediately welcomed.[60] It was clear from this anthology that al-Badawi's idea of a poet coincided with the current picture of the poet as the public spokesman of his people, as most of his poems were of public or national interest. In the course of his life, this early assumption came into grips with his originality which struggled to liberate itself and assert its own independent genius. This will be discussed in the coming pages.

Al-Badawi's life, as would be expected, was linked constantly with political adventure. He launched himself on a political career very early in life, was put into prison several times in his younger days,[61] and has experienced the rigours of self-exile for many years since the late fifties. However, he also knew public honour, became a member of parliament six times and a minister four times. It is the paradoxical state of contemporary Arab life that a poet who spent his life singing the love of his country and people cannot find a place for himself in his country under progressive governments. A schism in the ways of thinking of two generations and in their assessments of aims, methods and ideals has brought about this grave misunderstanding. A keen observer can understand this and perhaps even expect it, but from the artist's and the critic's point of view this tragic blow to the life of a great poet can be assessed only in the light of the human condition and the attitudes and feelings it invokes. Dahhān, probably cautious against political implications, neglected discussing al-Badawi's poetic contribution in his book dedicated to poetry in modern Syria.[62] This omission is all the more regrettable when one remembers the poverty of poetry among the earlier generation of Syrian poets in this century, and the compensating riches of al-Badawi's contribution.

In al-Badawi a new level of poetic creativity is manifest. There is this main difference between him and the neo-Classicists: that he, and al-Jawāhīrī with him do not merely emulate the Classical poetry, but belong to the very heart of the Classical tradition and, in purity of style, strength of texture and power of language could have been true Classicals. Al-Jawāhīri has been discussed already. In al-Badawi this Classical level is achieved without alienating the poet from his immediate world. He does not appear as a fleeting voice from the fourth century of the Hijira, like al-Kāzimi or al-Buzm for example, repeating the words of the old bards, but rather as a direct continuation of the living tradition in which he is one of the greatest masters. "The only remaining proof of the Classical

school...", a writer said of him.[63] He achieves this mainly by using a kind of diction that, despite its freshness, is very Classical, a chosen vocabulary of words that suit, in the main, both ages. His imagery, though not out-worn with Classical use, and often his very own, is never alienated from the Classical concept of an image. Both diction and image are vivid, effective and alive. This is a very rare achievement for such a well-rooted Classicist.

His style has been compared to that of al-Buḥturi, delicately worked and graceful. "Every verse is an elegant flower, a cup brimming with wine: full of colour....fragrance and ecstacy....".[64] However, al-Badawı can boast of a far deeper poetic sensibility than al-Buḥturı and a much more complicated poetic personality. In his more mature poetry al-Badawı surpasses all his neo-Classical contemporaries, including Shauqi, by his capacity to pave his way to universality, to arrive at the poetic moment in which the factual and the metaphysical merge. In his poetry there is a constant thirst, a persistent loneliness, a deep foreboding which is often explained by events but which is essentially metaphysical in nature. His early studies in Sufi poetry prompted by a complex, deep and highly sensitive poetic personality, must have helped towards this. This will be illustrated in the following pages.

Perhaps one of the first comparisons we can draw between al-Badawi's creativity and the conservative compositions of a poet like Jabrī for example, concern their respective methods of writing a poem. Jabrī has furnished us with his detailed testimony of the workings of his mind while composing, as we have just seen. Al-Badawı appears not to have written anything on the subject, but he has spoken about an instance which is most significant. During one of his election campaigns (probably in 1956) he underwent a most poignant poetic experience. A poem occurred to him and he fell into the state of automatic reaction to the outpourings of images and ideas so that he became oblivious of all the confusion and excitement

outside. A huge crowd had gathered to hear him talk about his political plans, but he shut himself up in a room and kept delaying his appearance until the whole poem was written. It was a long and beautiful love-mystical poem which he called "The Holy Flame" (اللهب القدسي).*[65] This experience fits in exactly with the poetry that is written in "a complete state of automatism", as Robin Skelton says,[66] when a poem imposes itself on the poet and must be written. It does not follow that all true poetry must be written in this way,[67] but such an experience is only possible for an authentic poet. And although the same poet may write many poems which are more consciously written than this, a certain amount of what Skelton calls 'mindlessness'[68] is always involved in the poetic experience of an authentic poet.

Al-Badawi idealises the image of the poet. He also extolls the kingdom of the heart. "When a poet finds his way to the world of his heart, then he has found his way to the beauty of his God, and sipped the wine of His love and entered into communion with Him. The poet's proximity to God and his enjoyment of His light come next only to that of the prophets' but above those of any great man or reformer in the world. For a great man, whether he be a leader or conqueror, a scientist or a philosopher, a reformer or explorer is made....by the combined efforts of the home, the school, historical events, opportunities, time and environment. But the poet is the sheer creation of God....The making of the poet is an attribute with which God has honoured Himself alone....In this lies the meaning of the poet's pride and self-assurance."[69] Then he says : "O you who are proud of your wealth : here in my heart are treasures which no dreams and aspirations can attain.

"O you who are proud of your power : here in my heart is the creative conquering power which challenges tyrants and Pharaohs....

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* It is possible, however, that the poem as a whole was written on two different occasions. In the stanza beginning on p.12 and until the end of the poem a new spirit and a different tone are manifest.

"O you who are suffering from /the fear of/ old age and death : here in my heart is evergreen youth and immortality, renewed with every heart-beat....

"In this lie the poet's genius and pride, a pride that yields only to the majesty of God alone and of great and lofty beauty. So when a poet falls from his heaven and stoops....to sing at the feasts of tyranny, or when he retreats from the conflict of freedom against tyranny, or brings down his glory to serve the glory of a ruler or any other great man, then he has denied the grace of God and alienated himself from His beauty...."[70]

In his poetry, too, he extolled the poet:

71 الدهـر ملك المبقريـة وحدهـا لا ملـك جبـار ولا سفـاح

and this:

72

جلّ الذى خلق الدنيا وزينهـا بالشعر اصفى المصفى من مزايـاه
نحن الذين اصطفانا من احبتـه فلو تدار الطلى كنا ندامـاه

Al-Badawi's poetry showed a great development over the years. He never turned his back on the poetry of occasion, but later on he chose only the more dignified occasions. An early poem written in 1924 for the memorial ceremonies of the death of the Iraqi Maḥmūd Shukri al-Alūsi and the Egyptian al-Manfalūṭi[73] shows marked conventional affinities, although a fleeting hint of al-Badawi's later obsession with genius is shown in the verse:

74 يطوى الزمان النابغين فينطوى لذهابهم امم ويهلك جيل

But other images are most conventional in both concept and method of use. The two dead men are likened to full moons and to stars. Both have been borne to their graves in a procession that has no end:

75 ومشيعان الى القبور بموكب يرتد عن الطرف وهو كليل

and for them the whole Arab world mourns with tearful convulsions, etc. This should be no criterion for judgment on al-Badawi, for it was written when the poet was sixteen or seventeen years of age, and his poetry was still to develop. His later poems, scattered here and there in the different magazines and newspapers of the Arab world, should furnish an interesting study for the critic and the literary historian. For in the best among them the instinctive tendency of the poet to write about true experiences of a subjective nature is manifest. There is a constant attempt at luring the theme of the poem into one which he could personally share with the honoured object of the poem. In his poem on the thousand years anniversary of Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī, for example, he begins with some rather dry verses of an objective nature and an old fashioned play on words in the last verse:

76

خير العقائد في هواى عقيـــــدة شماء ذات توثب وجمـــــــــاح
تبنى الحياة على هوى ايمانهـــــا والعقل مثبت غيرها والماحـــــي
لا تشك من قصر الحياة فربمـــــا اغنت اشارتها عن الايضـــــاح
سفر الحياة اذا اكتفيت بمتنـــــه اغناك موجزه عن الشـــــراح

Then he is able to bring about the theme of woman, a theme dear to his heart, and he soars immediately to real poetic heights; talking to the dead poet he says:

77

أتضيق بالانثى وقلبك لم يضـــــق بالوحش بين سباسب وبطـــــاح
يا ظالم التفاح في وجناتهـــــا لو ذقت بعض شمائل التفـــــاح
هي صورة لله جلّ جلالـــــــه عزّت نظائرها على الالـــــواح

But the best of al-Badawi's poems of occasion are his public elegies. In these there is much more than lament for a leader or martyr. There is a personal loss. For most of these men were his friends,[78] a part of the circle of early pioneers in the national experience of this century. Their

death is a premonition, a warning which reminds him of the destiny of man. But, with aristocratic obstinacy, he evades the real issue of universal death, and keeps to the immediate issue of the death of a leader, a member of the first circle of friends. The death of one is an occasion to lament the death of all:

79

لا تسلها فلن تجيب الطلول المغاوير مثخن او قتيل
موحشات يطوف في صمتها الدهر فللدهر وحشة وذهول
غاب عند الثرى احباء قلبي فالثرى وحده الحبيب الخليل
خيمت وحشة الفراغ على الاحياء فالقبر وحده المأهول

and this:

79 اصبحت بعدهم حيران منفردا والريح معولة والليل معتكر

They are nearly always buried in the sand, which devours them, while the dreary winds battle around the graves. They, his friends, have:

79 تقيلوا الرمل في الصحراء واتسدوا

and then this physical image, horrifyingly poignant:

79 وفي الرمال بنان افردت ويد

The desert, where his beloved friends are buried is a vast stretch of wilderness:

79 بموحش من رمال البيد منبسط يضلّ في شاطئيه الصبر والجلد

and this:

تهدهم الصحراء هدّا وللردى سلاحان في البيد الهواجر والفقر

79

This brings us to a very important point in the study of his poetry. That although his use of certain images persists, it is at the same time capable of a variety of interpretations. The image of the desert, for example, repeats itself in many of his elegies, and in many others which are not elegies at all. In his elegies this vast representation of a wilderness can denote, to the reader, the hopeless end of man after death, the eternal annihilation. But al-Badawi is a deep believer in God and th

doctrine of Islam, and therefore one must look for another interpretation. It might be suggested that here he means by the desert the utter loneliness of the poet himself after the death of his friends. However, knowing al-Badawi's life and the existing discrepancies of Arab life on the whole, one is led rather to the idea that the desert here is the forgetfulness these men of the first generation of pioneers have suffered at the hands of a growing, and to al-Badawi, an ungrateful generation. This will also explain the persistence of this symbol, which is the symbol of loneliness and hopeless suffering, in his other poetry:

80 ويح السراب على الصحراء تسلمه رمالها السمر من تيه الى تيه

It often changes tone as when he says:

81 لم تغرف الحور اشهى من سلافتنا رفّ الهجير ندى لما سقيناه

or this:

82 لو رفّ حبك في بيداء لاهبة على الظماء رحيقا ما وردناه

or even this, addressing the spirit of Abu al-'Alā',:

83 خلف الهجير وعنفه ولهيبه ما شئت من ظل وطيب نفاح

Nevertheless, it shows a sustained obsession with the same theme. We have here one of the most impressive introductions of the poetic symbol into a poetry which might seem, to the avant-garde , quite old fashioned at the first glance. It is apparent that he has been influenced here by the Islamic mystics, but his symbols and images remain completely his own.

For a symbol is characterised by several qualities whick Skelton discusses in some detail.[84] The symbol is described as independent and not bound to any "arbitrarily defined quality."[85] This gives it great flexibility. Moreover, it possesses "great associative value and multiplicity of meanings.../and/ acts independently within the poem... /without/ depending upon any comparisons with, or equation with, concept or idea."[86]

The symbol of the wilderness evokes several other symbols, signs and simpler images. It calls forth the image of 'fire' which accompanies the mid-day desert. Witness his prose essay on the poet Iqbāl, which is as poetic as any poem could be:

87 " ففي هذه الصحراء التي عرفت كل شاعر وكل نبي .....
.... وقد حمي الهجير وتعرّت الرمال من الظلال والافياء، مرّ اقبال "

"And in this wilderness which has known every prophet and poet...where the noon sun is at its hottest, and the sands are stripped of all shade and shadow, Iqbāl passed." Again:

88 " وحميت وقدة الهجير في صحراء التيه واختفت الحياة .... "

"The fire of noon blazed in the wilderness, and life disappeared..."

The wilderness is the inevitable bridge over which every genius must pass:

89 " ولكل عبقري في الدنيا صحراء تيهه ،تسلمه الى الهدى او تسلمه الى الردى "

"Every genius on earth has his own wilderness, which hands him over either to the guided path, or to /his/ death."

But the fire is not always an evil, scorching fire. It is also the fire of love, "the holy flame" as he called it in his poem, mentioned above. This is sometimes the mystic fire of the sufis and although it is often poured forth on strictly earthly objects, it retains its nobility because it surpasses the temporary state of love to an eternal, unquenchable fire in the heart:

90 قلبي الذي لوّن الدنيا بجذوته احلى من النور نعماه وبؤساه

The beloved one, who cannot experience the same fire has much to lose:

91 ناء عن النار لو طاف اللهيب به لو هجت هذه الدنيا شظاياه

And this eternal fire brings about a persistent thirst in the heart:

92 نعبّ منه بلا رفق ويظمؤنا فنحن اصدى اليه ما ارتشفناه

Examples of this are many. The fire here must be regarded as a symbol because of the multiplicity of meanings it affords throughout his poetry.[93] But the desert gives him yet another image, "the mirage", which he uses with great success in one of his most famous poems. The whole poem merits quotation:[94]

[94]

أ حنا السراب على قلبي يخادعه — بالوهم من نشوة السقيا ويغريه
أ فكيف رحت ولي علم بباطله — اهوى السراب وارجوه واغليه
* ويح السراب على الصحراء تسلمه — رمالها السمر من تيه الى تيه
* يزور الماء للسقيا ولهفته — حرى الى منهل يحنو فيسقيه
** جلا النمير وما ابتلت جوانحه — من النمير ولا ابتلت مآقيه
** ايامه خدع للركب ضاحكة — سخرا ، وللعدم القاسي ليالية
** صرعاه لو عرفوا الاسرار ما جزعوا — مما يعانون بل مما يعانيه
أ هيمان لهفان لا مأوى لوحشته — قلبي الذى وسع الاكوان يؤويه
* ابكي لبلواه تحنانا ومغفرة — روح الالوهة روحي حين ابكيه
** ادعو السراب الى روحي لينزلها — ريفا وظلا وينأى عن بواديه
* لهفي عليه اسيرا في يدى قدر — يميته كل ليل ثم يحييه
** يفيض مثل رفيف الجفن زاخرة — اقلبه جنّ ام جفت سواقيه
* ما للسراب دنا حتى اذا اكتحلت — بسحر دنياه عيني شط دانيه
** انت السراب ولكني على ظمأي — بانهر المطر والصهباء افديه
* محوت من قلبي الدنيا فما سلمت — الا طيوف هوانا وحدها فيه

This poem seems to contain here, not a symbol, but an allegorical image. The beloved here is the mirage which appears to him invitingly but only to vanish from his sight. The direct identity of the image with the beloved makes it allegorical, because the allegorical image is "dependent upon an explicit identification of it with a concept or idea."[95] However, his use of mirage as an image varies also, and becomes more symbolic For it is mirage in the following verses which makes life bearable by furnishing it with false promises:

96 يزوى لي الرمال جنـــى وظـــــلا ويغمـز بالكؤوس وبالشـــــراب

and this:

97 واشقاني اليقين فينا حنينـــــــــــي الى الخدع المنضـــــرة السراب

The images of the desert, sand, fire, mirage and the idea of the unquenchable thirst call forth two kinds of opposites in al-Badawi's poetry:

1. Antinomous images. These are exemplified by the dew, pure water, satiety, drinking:

الرى ،سكر ، سقيا ،مترع ،تغرف ،نرشف ،نعب ،نشـــوى ،امـــواه ،النمـــــــــــير

wine:* خمـر ،راح ، الـكلـــى ،سلافـه ،حميـا ، رحيـــق ، الصهبـــاء ،معتقـــــــــة

shades: عـر ،عبيـر ،ريـا ،عبـــق ،طيـــوب fragrance:** افيـــاء ، ريـف ،ظـــــــل

honey: المعسـول ،الجنـــــــى , etc.[98] These are not used as symbols in his poetry, as a rule, nor as allegorical images, but as sudden contrasts to the central symbol or image, which greatly intensifies the meaning.

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* The many names for wine are reminiscent of Ibn al-Fārid̤'s and other mystics' use of the many synonyms for wine. "حميـا" appears in the al-Tā'iyya al-Kubrā :

99 سقتنـي حميـا الحب راحـة مقلتـــي وكأس محيا من عن الحسن جلـــــت

Translated by R.A. Nicholson:

"The hand of mine eye gave me love's strong wine to drink, when my cup was the face of Her that transcendeth beauty."[100]

In this poem he uses other words meaning wine or states of intoxication:

" شمـول ", "نشوة " , " سكـر " , " انتشـاء ", etc.

" المدامة" appears in al-Khamriyyah:

101 شربنا على ذكر الحبيب مدامـــــــة سكرنا بها من قبل ان يخلق الكـــرم

Translated by A.J. Arberry:

"We quaffed upon the remembrance of the Beloved a wine wherewith we were drunken, before ever the vine was created."[102]

** Many synonyms for fragrance also appear in Ibn al-Fārid̤. For a single example of his verse:

103 ارج النسيم سرى من الـــزوراء سحرا فأحيا ميت الاحيـــــاء

اهدى لنا ارواح نجد عرفـــه فالجو منه معنـــبر الارجـــاء

Translated by A.J. Arberry:

"The sweet perfume of the night-journeying breeze wafted from al-Zaurā' at dawn, and brought back to life him who was dead indeed, though numbered by among the living...

"The winds of Nejd vouchsafed to us the fragrance of that perfume, wherewith the air upon every side was redolent as though with ambergris."[104]

2. An opposite reaction on the part of the poet to the same harsh images so much connected with human suffering. The poet calls forth at times a great spiritual strength, and aided with a wealth of mystic emotion, plunges himself in the furnace with mystical elation:

105 ولا شفى الله جرحا في سريرته ... نديان ينطف منه الخمر والشهد

or this:

106 انا والهم كلما اقبل الهم ... مشوق يلقى اخاه المشوقا

This is most interesting for it gives al-Badawi's poetry further weight by furnishing it with a paradox that immediately elevates it. Misery in the following verses becomes imbued with a healing power:

107 والهموم الحسان تفعل في الانفس ... ما تفعل الغواني الحسان

so that never would he want to be freed from his spiritual pains:

108 لا اوحش الله قلبي من مواجعه ... ولا تحول عن نعمائها الحسد

The obsession with this idea carries him even further into heights hitherto unattained where even paradise becomes meaningless because it is free of pain:

109 ان الخلود وما تروى مزامعه ... عن السعادة في الاخرى نقيضان
ملّ المقيمون فيها من هنائهم ... كما يمل السقام المدنف العاني
لودّ في كل ما تجريه من عسل ... ومن خمور ومن در ومعقيان
هنيهة من شقاء يطمئنّ بها ... الى معاناة الآم واشجان

How very distant is this from the flat predictable statements of his immediate contemporaries, where the words of a poem are in routine conventional relations and do not have a dynamic effect on one another and therefore do not cross the boundaries of the conventional. C. Brooks asserts that paradoxes are an essential element in poetry, and says that they "spring from the very nature of the poet's language."[110] He must mean here the authentic poet, of course.

Al-Jundi's reaction to the above verses is one of bewildered wonder, and he half rejects them. As he senses the "strangeness of this poetic /way/ of thinking", he asks "Where has the poet brought it from?"[111] In

this he represents the mind that has been long accustomed to the meanings and comparisons of conventional poetry, a poetry remarkably characterized by clear, direct methods. These verses also seem to bewilder him:[112]

وللخلود على اهل الجحيم يـــــد تجزى مع الدهر احسانا باحســـــان

لا يألمون ولا تشكو جسومهـــــــم من اللظى فهي نيران بنـــــــيرا ن

We are witnessing here, quite clearly, an example of the schism that took place, in varying degrees of gravity, not only in poetry but also in the deepest poetic sensibility of the reading public, which includes the literary critics and the historians of literature. From this time onwards we shall constantly meet with opposed poetic sensibilities that find no point of meeting and that talk completely different languages all the time. This sprang, not only from the natural order of the eternal strife between old and new, as happens in normal phases of poetic development, but also from the character of the conventional poetic sensibility of the older generation, which liked only what was clearly pointed and well-explained in a poem. It was a sensibility, moreover, which did not shrink from direct statements in poetry[113] and was elated at the short didactic outbursts of aphorisms. But this wisdom must be characterised by limpid meaning and be in line with the inherited stock concepts of life and man. This sensibility being what it is, rejects the oblique, the paradoxical and the ambiguous.

But paradox in al-Badawi's poetry exists in many forms and not only as a glorious and mystic acceptance of elation in pain. " حنا يدللّنـــــا ظلم المقاديـــــر"[114] In the following extract he declares that his soul was not stained by his sins: " جسدى آثم وروحي بتـــول".[115] The purity of his sins is such that the Houris themselves: " تستعير رؤاها مـــــن خطاياـــــاه"[116] These are also the white sins of the beloved:

117 آثامك الخفرات البيض لوجليســـت لطور سينا لندت ذروة الطـــــــــور

This reflects a new sophistication of outlook, a contemporaneous sensibility and a complex poetic nature. His deep love of beauty which prompted him to say:

113 كبرت للطلعة النشوى اسبّحها اكان لله ام للحسن تكبيرى

and to say also:

119 يثيرني كل حسن فتنة وهوى فما امر بماء غير صديان

has shown him a beautiful prostitute to be worthy of adoration:

120 محراب حسنك قد وقفت ببابه وسجدت اعبد دمية المحراب

His sensitive nature, which continuously yearns towards a genuine unification of all existence sees in this girl's eyes the vision of all his beloved ones:

121 مرحى وفي عينيك من صور الهوى ما لا اعدّ ومن روى الاحباب

The sudden emotion he feels for her is not ruined by pity or condescension. She, the beautiful woman, is donned with majesty:

122 ولمحت فيه جلال حسنك راقدا فوق الشفاه اللعس والاهداب

and his love is given freely, ecstatically:

123 ولقد تبينت الهوى لم يخفه في مخدع الشهوات الف نقاب

He is here deeply influenced, as it seems, by Ibn al-Fārid̤'s conception of beauty, which refers all beautiful things to God's Beauty itself.[124] This is a completely new realm of experience in modern profane poetry. In his best poems one finds instead of the accurate representation of the visual, the play on words and the description of the outer contours of the image, a profound penetration into the abysses of the self, into the realms of the unknown. Many stanzas in his poems experience sudden flights to boundaries

where a union with the whole of existence is effected:

125

لفني والدجى على هذه الصحراء — سحر مبهم مجهول
لفني والدجى فأفنى كلينا — سعة من جلاله وشمول
اي سر نريد في الكون — والكون معنّى بسرنا مشغول
نحن كون لا كائنان ضعيفان — ألح الهوى وتم الوصول

The vastness of a personal sort of eternity is attained:

126

وحدتي عالم من السحر والفتنة — حلو القطاف خمرا وريقا
طف بقلبي تجد به الف دنيا — لا يلاقي الشقي فيها الشقيا
سكنته الشموس من كل افق — وتحدى اشقاءها ان يضيقا

The early influence of a Sufi background is not the only factor to have contributed towards this; his natural surroundings, the beautiful and mystically inspired Alawite Mountains also played their part. This will also be the early natural environment of another outstanding poet, Adūnīs. Dewy greenery; the varying colour of sky, mountain and trees; thickly wooded valleys; sudden, gushing streamlets at every turn; the eternal music of the woods, the flowing waters, and the chorus of birds; and the cool, cool breezes.[127] Here there is no thirst, no arid stretches of sand reaching to the far horizon, no scorching heat. The mystical fusion with the whole of nature and of the universe as well as the love of beauty, could both have been inspired by this childhood scenery. But this immediately confronts us with the nature of his most important symbols, all of which pertain to a desert landscape, quite alien to his own early natural environment. Was life around him "overwhelmingly oversymbolised" as Margaret Mead puts it, talking about another poetic experience, "that there is no place....[for his] own imagination to work at all?"[128] Was it because of this that al-Badawi instinctively hesitated to choose as his most important symbols, images taken from his own early evergreen surroundings? These have already been exploited and probably exhausted by al-Mahjar poets. Was it then an artistic trick of his, intuitively undertaken to choose his central symbols from a stark contrast with images of his own environment and to look to the desert as a source of symbolic wealth,

exploiting his environmental images mostly to mitigate the harsh desert symbols or to furnish them with a suitable range of contrasts? This must have played a part in his choice which makes it, to some extent, a personal idiosyncracy. The fact that Ibn al-Fārid, among others, used images of desert,[129] fire,[130] water and the idea of thirst[131] helps towards an understanding of his use of these themes, or even, one might say, his perfection of them. But as has already been said, his poetic personality appropriates them completely and gives them fresh authenticity. He had linked the desert and its symbols with suffering, often great suffering, and it is interesting to see how the poet has borrowed here the old physical suffering of the nomad Arabs and their eternal fight against the desert and changed them into symbols of spiritual suffering. A true inner thirst and a feeling of tragic loss assert themselves poignantly through these symbols. This is not a conventional relapse at all. It is rather a successful artistic capacity to exploit a conventional image afresh and give it new life and greater dimensions.

What makes his poetry more infectious is the fervour with which the verses are imbued. There is between the lines a vivid intoxication which gives his poetry that special passionate poignancy, and marks it out immediately among contemporary Classical poems that feed mostly on stock emotions. This saves his poetry from too much involvement with form and style. The occasional glimpses of real insight, the occasional arrival at a tragic, often metaphysical tone, the occasional flights to universal heights prevent his poetry from degenerating into sentimental rhetoric.

The flow of emotion in his poetry is accompanied by a luxurious flow of rhythm. Al-Jawāhiri's passionate rhythmic waves breaking against a background of suffocated emotions is contrasted in al-Badawi by this gentle, silky flow of both rhythm and emotion. A pure lyricism is achieved, without the verses ever becoming sentimental, banal or of loose structure. The diction is well chosen to suit them both.

To al-Badawi, this last element is a matter of conscious art, not a mere intoxication with words. The right meaning is arduously sought and closely observed. He believes that no word is unpoetic. He once gave as an example of this his own use of the word " شـط " "shaṭṭa" in the following verse:

132 ويح السراب دنا حتى اذا اكتحلـــت بسحر دنياه عيني شط دانيـــــه

"This word might not be sweet on the ears, if heard by itself, but in the context it is just right."[133] This idea coincides with Richards' idea that "no word can be judged as to whether it is good or bad, correct or incorrect, beautiful or ugly, or anything else that matters to a writer, in isolation."[134] It must be stressed here that al-Badawi could have had no previous knowledge at all of Richards' idea. Al-Badawi is a master of the poetic art, and is in a position to arrive at critical definitions through his own involvement with it.

But, in general, the tendency of al-Badawi is towards choosing the most beautiful sounding words to express the right meaning. Witness his choice of the word "تغـرف" to suit the meaning of the second half of the verse:

135 لم تغرف الحور اشهى من سلافتنـــــا رف الهجير ندى لما سقيتـــــــاه

But although the Classical treasury of individual words has been exploited to the full,* his combinations are not always Classical. The early symbolic experiment of the late thirties, in which the evocative power of words was exploited after the nineteenth century symbolic

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* This includes many of Ibn al-Fārid's individual words. But al-Badawi's exploitation of these does not drive him to Ibn al-Fārid's artistry and artificial play on words.[136] In fact it is an achievement on al-Badawi's side to be able to exploit this wealth of individual words without being bound to their artificial context.

experiment in France, must have left a subtle influence on him and we have such combinations as " ورنوة لك راح النجم يرشفهـــــــا "[137]
" رشفت صوتك في قلبي معتقـــــة "[138] " لتستحم روّاك الشقر لـــــولاه "[139]
" آثامك الخفـــــرات البيـــــض "[140]

and this use of " شاطئيـــه " (its coasts) for the desert:

بموحش من رمال البيد منبســـــط يضل في شاطئيه الصـــبر والجلـــــد [141]

New and important dimensions are added to Arabic poetry by al-Badawi's intermittent contributions, but the limited outlook of some modern critics and their hasty assumptions have misled them into dismissing al-Badawi merely as one of the conventional poets[142] who wrote perhaps better poetry. This published view, and al-Badawi's neglect of publishing his main anthology have deprived the reading public and the younger generation of poets of the benefit of his important poetic experiment.

His achievement is a tribute to the essential individualism of poetry and to its obstinate refusal to confine itself to any one fashion, or to any one school. The central point in poetic achievement is the genius of the poet, not his special concepts. Al-Badawi proved that. He never belonged to a school of poetry, except in the most general meaning of the term. A revivalist of the first order, his adventure went beyond the boundaries of neo-Classicism. And although he encountered the public and wrote poems of occasion and platform poetry, his best poetry explored the farthest realms of personal experience. and of private agony and ecstacy. The intoxicated atmosphere that dominates these poems gives to his poetry a genuine, ardent tone.

Moreover, al-Badawi's poetry is a surprising example of a neo-Classical poetry with a vision. His is a desultory vision, however, not

a sustained theme; it imposes itself intermittently and is never premeditated. This vision can only be interpreted individually by critics because it is not absolutely crystal clear. For the poet's genius is battling continuously with his poetic inheritance, and with the current poetic practice of his generation. It is only when his genius imposes itself in utter unconsciousness of those other forces that visionary poetry can be written by him. This should explain the sudden flights to limitless heights in many of his poems. In fact al-Badawi's poetry furnishes very good material for the study of the conflict between traditionalism and originality.

Al-Badawi's vision is manifold. Al-Jawāhiri's impressive vision of the hand that stretches from behind the curtain of time to write the new destiny of man in the Arab world:

143 وكفا تمد وراء الحجاب فترسم في الافق ما ترسم

is in contrast to the vision in al-Badawi's poetry of the dead heroes buried deep in unfathomable depths of sand and forgetfulness. But he also has other happier visions. Love, majestic and elevated to the throne of God himself:

144 الخالقان وفوق العقل سرهما كلا هما للغيوب الحب واللـه
كلاهما انسكبت فيه سرائرنا وما شهدناه لكنّا عبدناه

and always accompanied by exquisite beauty:

145 سر السعادة في الدنيا وان خفيت تجلوه منك على الاكوان عينان
آمنت بالحب ما شاءت عذوبته آمنت بالحب فهو الهادم الباني

This is a long way from the didactic poetry of al-Rāṣāfı and al-Zahāwī, and from the conventional balance of Jabrı and Mardam.

2: THE CHANGE OF POETIC SENSIBILITY

(i) 'Umar Abū Rīshah

Badawī al-Jabal is a perfect example of genius battling with deeply rooted Classicism. As we have seen, his whole background was steeped in it. Yet his genius asserted itself in a poetry strongly charged with emotions, often of a personal tone, and in a successful use of symbols and other images. But this was effected without touching some of the basic elements of Arabic poetry, for his poetic energy worked within definite boundaries of form and style, and of what Graham Hough calls "the spirit of the language" which should mean here the "whole drift and pressure given by the whole body of poetry written in...."[146] Classical Arabic. It was not at variance with old and deep rooted attitudes. In it there was no momentous change that could be discerned, though it was a poetry of much wider dimensions than any of the poetry that was being written by others around him. His subjects were of such an universal quality that they could belong to any age or time in Arab culture and were therefore not distinctively modern. This is perhaps why Ṣalībā found it easy to incorporate Badawī al-Jabal with the other 'conventional' poets in Syria, as he called them.[147] He did not discern the basic differences between al-Badawī's poetry and that of his colleagues.

But Ṣalībā[148] and 'Abbūd with him,[149] recognise an immediate change of sensibility in another contemporaneous poet, 'Umar Abū Rishah(1908).[150] It was Abū Rishah who gave to Syrian poetry of the thirties and forties a new vitality and put it on the road towards more modern sensibility. Two factors helped to make this possible for him. Firstly he grew up in Aleppo,[151] a city which had its own independent poetic tradition. This tradition included some original experiments. Aleppo, moreover, did

not come under the direct influence of the entrenched Classicism and the conservative spirit of the Damascene centre and of the Arab Academy of language and its magazine.

Secondly, Abū Rīshah had a mixed education. He was the first Syrian poet who had a really high education in a foreign university, the American University of Beirut.[152] There he met other Arab poets[153] who were themselves falling under the influence of a mixed culture. The most important among them, Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān, was about to become the first poet to give fame and value to the poetic energy in Palestine and to modernize a hitherto quiet and conservative output of verse in that country.

Abū Rīshah grew up in a family all of whom were lovers of poetry. His father, himself a poet[154] and the son of a Bedouin prince,[155] was sent by the Ottomans to Istanbul to study.[156] His mother, a Palestinian of notable parentage, seems to have had a profound influence on her son. She was the daughter of al-Shādhili Sufi chief[157] whose house in Acre, just by the main features of historical interest (the walls, the al-Jazzār Mosque and the al-Bāshā baths), was a centre for the men and women of al-Ṭarīqah and a zāwiyah for wayfarers. The women of the family were of the first calibre in culture and moral (including nationalistic) attributes.[158] Abū Rīshah's mother is said to have known a good amount of poetry by heart[159] and her influence on her son must have been one of fine urbanization and of refined taste. There are hardly any lingering Bedouin roughness in Abū Rīshah's poetry.

Abū Rīshah had a greater chance of furthering his education in foreign poetry when he was sent to Manchester in order to study.[160] Although his subject was of an industrial nature[161] he seems to have had great opportunities for studying some famous English poets, particularly Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, Milton, Tennyson, Browning, Poe, Gray and others including the French poet, Baudlaire.[162] His favourites were Baudlaire and Poe.[163]

He began his poetic career early, before he had become acquainted with the foreign poets. Following custom, he began by direct imitation of the Classical poets.[164] He learnt from them the poetic language and the sentence formation,[165] but regarding the poetic idea and meaning, he claims that "their crippled imagination fell short" of any brilliant ideas in poetry.[166] He arrived at the point where they caused him only boredom.[167]

The influence of his foreign readings in poetry is rather subtle but deeply rooted. What happened to Abū Rīshah affected him permanently. A kind of delicate reaction took place in his poetry. A new approach and a new spirit showed themselves in his more mature verse. By the middle of the thirties Abū Rīshah was quite a well-known poetic figure among the young public. By the beginning of the forties he was a very popular poet in Syria and Lebanon and his poetry-readings from the platforms of educational institutions in Beirut, Aleppo and Damascus showed his immense fame and popularity among the more educated classes of society.[168]

Ever since this popular beginning Abū Rīshah's career was linked with the platform. His poetry had of necessity to evolve from this close connection with the poet-orator. The tone, the rhythms and the evolvement of meanings had to keep this fact always within sight. It is a mark of his genius that Abū Rīshah was able to answer the public demand for a declaimed poetry and at the same time to introduce into this poetry some vital innovations. Had he begun one decade later, when declaimed poetry was becoming unpopular among the more modern poets, the course of his poetic genius might well have been quite different. But as it was, Abū Rīshah's connection with the platform remained an important element in his poetic output, often dictating even the theme, in addition to the rhythms and music of his poems.

Two themes were most dominant in his poetry : love and nationalism. Perhaps the first observation that should be made about his poetry is the fact that it is a sophisticated poetry which does not really care about

a popular simplification of poetic diction, despite his involvement with platform poetry. In this he does not at all resemble al-Zahāwī or al-Ṣāfī. His poetry does not, moreover, encourage the introduction of themes basically unsuited to poetry as did that of al-Zahāwī and al-Raṣāfī in their scientific themes. Nor does it treat of such themes as would invite controversy or arouse astonishment in the reader, like some of al-Ṣāfī's choice of subjects. He chose the two most popular themes of modern Arabic poetry, nationalism and woman, and he attempted to introduce his innovations only within their range of possibilities. There was no tendency towards the primitive or the over-simplified. His is a poetry of an aristocratic nature: slow, majestic and well-proportioned.[169]

Abū Rīshah's poetry showed a new freedom in the realm of man-woman relationship. A change in the spirit of the era towards a more liberal expression of the emotional life, allowed him to speak about his personal exploits without fear of losing his prestige as a public figure. This was a total change from the attitude of poets like Mardam and Jabri who suppressed their inner feelings and appeared to the world only as public figures. The aim was directed towards achieving a high public and academic position and this came into conflict with the free expression of the emotion of love in conservative Syria at the time. But Abū Rīshah represented the youth of the thirties and forties, who belonged to a more Romantic era and a more liberal spirit, a youth already thoroughly infected with Western ideals. The love experience was able to find a diversity of expression at their hands and the whole role of the man as a lover took on different aspects. A considerable change has taken place since the hesitant love poetry of Shauqi and al-Raṣāfī. From this point of view Abū Rīshah's lov poetry was one of liberation of the love ideal and of the deep involvement with woman, an involvement stated now in more modern terms.

But it was a love poetry with a strong moral trend, or even with a

strong moral responsibility. Nowadays, one might find in his meandering exploits a lack of true experience and the confirmation of a polygamist spirit loving the idea of woman more than a true and sustained love experience with a single woman. One also finds in his violent outbursts an expression of suppressed and naive longings, and in his moral attitudes affected poses aimed at a show of morality. Nowadays it is even possible to look at all this poetry as one looks at a social document which portrays the emotional and psychological reactions of men in an Arab-Islamic society evolving rapidly and adopting random Western behaviour patterns without having shed away any of their own basic social and emotional attitudes. Hence these ludicrous prose explanations introducing so many of his poems, poems remarkably clear and direct in their approach.[170]

Abū Rīshah came from a strictly Islamic background which had later increasing acquaintance with Western ideas and attitudes. But if his own life reflects the life of an emancipated and well-cultured Moslem,[171] his poetry reflects deeper attitudes and beliefs, as all poetry should do. These betray a divided and rather traditional outlook on woman, a remnant from a less emancipated era when women lived in a secluded, well-protected world confined to very limited boundaries. The central theme of this outlook is that a woman is either pure or fallen. He expresses this poignantly:

172 أبتول ؟ سلّها من خدرها ... شوقها المخضوب بالحلم الهني
ام هلوك ؟ الفت روضتها ... شفة الساقي وكف المجتني

The good woman, in his opinion, has all the traditional, passive qualities praised in the inherited culture of the Arab people : shyness, innocence, moral pride and purity from the faults of passions. He even advises her outrightly to preserve these qualities.

173 تبريء الفتنة البكر ابت ... ان ترى خمرك في كأس حبيب
فاحملي الشوق فما تدري به ... اذن الواشي ولا عين الرقيب
واسفحيه رعشة تنضح ما ... قر في نهديك من خمر وطيب

When she has got rid of her desires, she must not be sad:

174 يا ابنة الاحلام لا تستقبلـــــي مصرع النشوة بالطرف الكئيـــــب

for it suffices that the lily, the symbol of purity, should enjoy in its DESERT the morning dew (which is pure and innocent) and the breezes of the sunset!:

175 يكتفـي الزنبـق في صحرائـــه بندى الفجر وانسام المغيـــــب

The second type of woman,(and there are only two types in this culture that qualify the moral quality of a woman), is a fallen one. She is "halūk"[176] and "baghiyy"[177] "dillatu al-rūḥ"[178] "sadūm al-ṭibāʿ"[179] etc. She gives herself freely, even joyfully, and the poet knows as he indulges in satisfying his desires that it is a temporary relation, serious but harmful and unable to endure:

180 حسنـاء هذا ليلي الممتـــــع فلتطوه في شوقها الاضلـــــع

ما كنت استنزف وجدى علـــــى اغرائه لو انـــه يرجـــــع

When he loves, it is a good woman with whom he meets like an angel meeting another:

181 كملاكـــين اذا ما التقيـــــا ما تعدت ثورة الشوق الشفاهـــــا

فنعب الكأس ريا بالمنـــــى ونبقي في فم الطهـر شذاهـــــا

Here the insistence on purity in his love for an innocent girl stands in contrast with his immediate past, which he hopes this new and innocent angel would forget:

182 منية النفس تناسـي سيـــــرة تركت في مسمع البغي صداهـــــا

واسدلي الستر على الماضي الـــذى اخذت من لهوه نفسي مناهـــــا

ذكرياتي كلها اغفت فـــــلا توقظيها من دياجير كراهـــــا

هي اهواء شباب مـــــترف بلغ الطهر على رجس خطاهـــــا

There is no hesitation on the poet's part to confess his sins. This confession of a sinful past is carried out in a candid, matter of fact manner, but this should not be astonishing to us if we remember the cultural background of Abū Rīshah's generation. The existence of a double standard of morality in this culture is so flagrantly apparent that the reader would

scarcely stop to question Abū Rīshah's attitude when he denounces an easy woman but declares that he arrived at purity through sin:

بلغ الطهر على رجس خطاهـــا في اهواء شباب مـــــترف

A man is allowed that for which a woman would be completely denounced. He can enjoy the generosity of a fallen woman but his love, when he gives it to an innocent girl, should not try to satisfy its carnal desires:

183 ولماهبت بتقبيلهـــــــا ورشف الرضاب الشهي النـــــدى

سمعت نداء الضمير الجريـــــح يتمتم يا وغـد ،لا تعتـــــد

This divided outlook is explained by the double standard of morality existent in Arab culture. However, it has been painstakingly, if somewhat mistakenly explained by Tawfīq Ṣāyigh in a long article on 'Umar Abū Rīshah's love poetry.[184] Ṣāyigh treated the whole problem from a Freudian point of view, making no allowance for the influence of the poet's own culture and its inherited attitudes. It might not be too far fetched to say that the existence of sharp differences in the moral standards of men and women in Arab culture are related to two elements in this culture, which exist side by side. The first is the relative liberty allowed to men by Islam in multiple marriage and the cult of concubinage. The second is the strict moral code applied to women since pre-Islamic times, which grew even more strict with the centuries, arriving finally at the complete seclusion of women. The sexual and emotional inhibitions of Arab women were in direct contradiction to the potential or actual liberty of men. The man's inherited attitudes were attitudes which boasted of potency and a relative freedom. In the light of this explanation the separation of love from desire in pre-marital relations in Abū Rīshah and others like him will be perhaps seen not as a pathological but as a cultural phenomenon connected directly to this cult of double standards and of woman's honour and purity. There is no real inhibition in Abū Rīshah, but a chivalrous abstinence prompted by a sense of duty to protect the woman's innocence and purity. This is not alien to the attitude of honourable men in the Arab society

of the thirties, especially men who, like Abū Rīshah, dreamed of public eminence. Ṣāyigh would have us believe that Abū Rīshah's abstaining from kissing an innocent girl is a pathological case. He says "The very idea that he is an aggressor should he kiss her shows the DISEASE FROM WHICH HE SUFFERS!"[185] One cannot agree here with this assumption. However, it would be unscientific to deny the possible existence of pathological attitudes to sex and love in Arab Islamic culture as explained by Freud. But in any attempt to assess the attitude and behaviour pattern of men towards women (and vice versa) in this particular culture, one would expect that cultural elements should be taken into primary consideration. One is inclined to suggest that the liberation of sex in Islamic culture needs a special and minute study before conclusions are finally drawn in the light of Freudian analysis. But living in this society, one is intuitively aware of basic attitudes and grows to recognise and accept them in literature.

This should not imply that all poetic expression about these matters followed this pattern of double standards. Abū Rīshah's generation was falling under various Western influences and the individual responses to these influences varied greatly. In Abū Rīshah's case cultural patterns harmonised with the poet's ambition to be a 'guiding spirit' in whom the ideal of moral integrity is realised. Morality always involves a choice between contradictions. Abū Rīshah's choice was a hard one because it was intimately guided by his sense of moral responsibility. When he liberated the love emotion in poetry and directed his poetry to his own experiences in life, he had to keep to this ideal. Thus in his liberation of the love emotion he confirmed traditional attitudes. This could not have had a real salutary effect on social development, but on poetry the free play of conflicting emotions was beneficial in the extreme.

Abū Rīshah's national poetry is a product of many factors: a keen sense of public responsibility and chivalry, a well-rooted Islamic up-

bringing which directed itself, in his poetic orientation, to the glorious moments of Islamic history[186] so closely connected with Arab glory and Arab supremacy, as well as a deep intuitive reaction to Syria's continuous involvement with Arab political strife. Abū Rīshah was remarkably obsessed with the political aspects of his era. But although he often caught the wishful spirit of national revival and sometimes exulted in the vision of glory and triumph,[187] he had, even before 1948,* a feeling of apprehension and a prophetic fear of an avalanching misfortune in the near future.[188]

Abū Rīshah's patriotic vision was panoramic, dealing with past, present and future, and despite his occasional loss of heart, his general spirit was positively optimistic and virile. This was one factor why Abū Rīshah was able to gain great popularity with all lovers of poetry in the fourth and fifth decades, for he was able to catch the spirit of his era and to lead it, giving his poetic oracles as sacred and infallible knowledge:

189 لا يموت الحق مهما لطمـــــت عارضيـــه قبضـــة المغتصـــــب

or this:

190 شرف الوثبة ان ترضي العلـــــى قلب الواثب ام لم يغلـــــــــب

or this:

191 بورك الخطب فكم لـــــف علـــــى سهمه اشتات شعـــــب مغضـــــب

or this:

192 ان للظلم جولـــــة فدعيـــــه رب حاو رداه في ثعبانـــــــــه

Abū Rīshah's strong links with Arabism and old Arab glory were presented, not in the conventional ruminative methods of other Arab national poets but by resorting to his own individual methods, his own imagery and his own expressions. This should not give the idea, however, that Abū Rīshah's language and methods were exclusively his own and that he did not use any of the stock words and expressions in contemporary national poetry, or any of the expressions of the old poetry. He did, in fact, resort to a free, if limited, borrowing from both. Examples of his use of the old

* 1948 is the date of what the Arabs call 'the Palestine Catastrophe'. In that year the political state of Israel was formed.

Classical language and images is manifest in such verses:

193 فقمزت المسومات فهبت بالمناجيد والقنا اليعاد
تتشظى على سنابكها الحمراء هام المشرديين الاعادى

and this:

194 شرف البيض ان تسيل على الاوجه بين الانداد والاندداد

and this:

195 واقامت عماد عزتها ما بين كفيك يا رفيع العماد

and this:

196 فتطل من افق الجهاد قوافل مصر يشدركابها ونزار

and this:

197 كم نبت اسيافنا في ملعب كبت اجيادنا في ملعب

and this:

198 فما هوى صارم الا رمى عنقا ولا هوى معول الا رمى صنما

An example of his use of conventional methods which are stereotyped and used generally by most modern conventional poets is his mention of the different Arab capitals, or famous places in the Arab world as synonyms of Arab unity:

199 يا روابي القدس يا مجلى السنا يا روى عيسى على جفن النبي
لمت الآلام منا شملنا ونمت ما بيننا من نسب
فاذا مصر اغاني جلّق واذا بغداد نجوى يثرب

and this:

200 اى قلب في الشام لم يصدم الاضلاع صدما على هوى بغداد

and this:

201 جبل النار لن تنام كما نمت جريح الصلى كسيح الطماح
لك حب في قاسيون وصنين وسينا ما له من براح

In the same line is his mention of Muḥammad and Jesus or Moslems and Christians also as a synonym of national unity between Moslems and Christians:

202 اى فلسطين يا ابتسامة عيسى لجراح الاذى على جثمانه
يا تشتي البراق في ليلة الاسراء والوحي ممسك بعنانه

This free appropriation of these general methods he adopted as emotional traps rather than as ready-made phrases to which a poet might resort for lack of more creative methods. Abū Rīshah proved himself to be an original poet in many of his methods and in his approach to many of his poems. As an Arab, he was able to react with a poetic force as equal as the emotional experience of his own nation. Thus his famous poem "Ba'da 'l-Nakbah"[203] was memorized by thousands of young Arabs after 1948. The self-reproach on a national scale is most effective and the comparison with a more glorious past most poignant:

204 رب " وامعتصماه " انطلقت ملء افواه الصبايا اليتّم
لامست اسماعهم لكنها لم تلامس نخوة المعتصم

Writers on Abū Rīshah stress his power of imagery and regard it as his greatest asset.[205] However, none of them was able to qualify those images and explain their poetic importance and their novelty. But these images can be qualified and their relations to other images in previous and contemporary poetry shown. In the first place these images are on the whole original. In the second place they are perceptible, concrete and vivid. We shall see later how another Syrian poet, 'Umar al-Nuṣṣ, used intangible images given to abstraction. But Abū Rīshah's images live vividly in the memory, such as this one describing a sick prostitute who likes to infect others with her disease:

206 كما النحلة الغضبى لدى وخز خصمها تموت ولكن وهي مرتاحة النفس

and as this:

207 ويح نفسي! أهذه ذكريات ام افاع تفح في جانبيا

and this very famous one:

208 ان للظلم جولة فدعيه رب حاو رداه من ثعبانه

and this:

209 مر بالعمر مر اجنحة الطير احست بمكمن الصياد

and this:

210 وضلوع البيرموك تجرى نعوشا حاملات هوامد الاجساد

Another important aspect of these images is their emotional involvement. The qualities of nature are utilised emotionally and are thus incorporated in the experience of the poet and not used merely in their outer contours:

211 والصخور الجسام ناتئة الانيـــاب تدمي اقدامـه وهو تائـــه
ورؤوس الاشواك ترتـد عنـــه وعليها ممزق مـــن ردائـــه
والافاعي تفح من كـل صـــوب نازعـات الى امتصاص دمائـــه

the rocks, the thorns and the snakes are there in a relevant relationship to the artist, the hero of the poem, forming obstacles and dangers in his path. There is a sharp contrast with other traditional images which he used, though less frequently, images such as these:

212 مأتم الشمس ضج في كبد الافـــق واهوى بطعنـــة نجـــلاء
عصبت أروس الروابي الحزانـــى بعصاب من جامدات الدمـــاء
فأطلت من خدرها غادة الليـــل وتاهت في ميســة الخيـــلاء
وأكبت تحل ذاك العصـــاب الارجواني باليـــد السمـــراء
وذوابات شعرهـــا تترامـــى في فسيح الآفاق والاجـــواء
وعيون السمـــاء ترنو اليهـــا من شقوق المـــلاءة الســـوداء

and these images in the same poem where he describes his muses:

213 فتهادت بناتهـــا باصطفـــاق الصنـــج والدف واتســـاق الغنـــاء
كدمى ميكل لقـــد نفخ اللـــه عليهـــا الختلاجة الاحيـــاء
يتمايلن راقصـــات نشـــاوى بدلال مفجـّر الاغـــراء
فمن الخصر عفـة تركـــت فـــي حلمة النهـد نفرة للعـــلاء
كل بنت جياشة الصـــدر ترمـــي اختها بابتسامـــة استهـــزاء

These images are rather artificial and traditional because they supply a physical image for a physical object and the connotations in them are very weak or even lacking altogether. It is really interesting to see this poet move from one kind of image to another arriving sometimes at highly developed allegories as manifested in his poem "Nasr".[214] This is one of

his most famous poems in which he describes an aging eagle who is forced by weakness and old age to descend to the low lands, abandoning his heights. After being pushed hither and thither by birds of lesser dignity, he gathers his remaining strength and flies back, crying, to the summit, where he drops down and dies. The poet then asks if he himself would ever return to his own heights or if the 'low lands' have killed his feelings. This poem was understood by a whole generation to mean the Arab people, their past glory and their present unhappy conditions. The destiny of the eagle, who, despite his weakness, ended in the dignified preservation of his pride and nobility, gave to the hearts of thousands of readers (and listeners) a positive hope that a return to the summit was possible.[215]

In a later poem he utilised both his Classical and his Western poetic education in a descriptive poem, of a high calibre. Describing the temple of Kajoraō in Bundelkhand in Northern India, he is reminiscent of both Al-Buḥturi in his famous sīniyyah in description of "Ṭāq Kisrā" and Keats in his "Ode on a Grecian Urn". Here he is strongly reminiscent of Keat's "Bold lover, never, never wilt thou kiss" :

216

وفتى يهم بقبلـــــة ... ويكاد يقطفها حنـــــان
قطع الحياء بها السبيل ... فما استعان ولا اعـــــان
تمضي الليالي وهو مـن ... نعمائها قـــــاصر ودان

The poem achieved great fame among the contemporary readers because of the poet's capacity to give life and vitality to his physical images, carved in stone:

217

كـــم دمية ذل الرخـام ... على انتفاضتها وهـــان
طلبت فاعطى ،واشرأبت فانحنـى ، وقســـت فـــلان
وتكاد تنقـل ظلهـــا ... وتسير طلقـة العنـــان

The fact that this is very similar to al-Buḥturi's poem does not really diminish its value, for Abū Rīshah was describing a completely different scene here and his capacity of delineating physical images with skill has

been known to the readers of his poetry ever since he started writing.

Another aspect of his poetry is that his poems, on the whole, grow to a climax. This was a real achievement on the poet's part. In fact Abū Rīshah's poetry is one of the first experiments which successfully followed an organic unity of the poem. Very few poems are flat and monotonous. However, writers on Abū Rīshah have overlooked this important point and have not mentioned it. This achievement is seen to be even greater when one remembers the comparatively early time in which Abū Rīshah was successfully experimenting. For in the early thirties, critical theories about the necessity of achieving organic unity in a poem were not yet really established.

(ii) Anwar al-'Aṭṭār

Abū Rīshah's poetry, like that of Abū Māḍi, is a mixture of Realism and Romanticism as well as of Classical and modern attributes. Perhaps this is one of the secrets of their popularity. Several Syrian poets of Abū Rīshah's generation as well as of the following one, also show these attributes. The poetry of Anwar al-'Aṭṭār (b. 1913) is a delicate mixture of dream and reality. He is a great lover of nature and a large part of his poetry is dedicated to it. Poems of a descriptive nature revolve around the glorification of scenery not only in Damascus and al-Ghūṭah, its famous oasis, but also of Baghdad and its Tigris, as well as of the picturesque Lebanese scenery. His descriptions of nature combine the traditional visual delineation of outer contours and physical characteristics with some of al-Mahjar's concept of Nature as a Great Being. There is a glorification of the desert in the following:

لا تنـال النكبـاء من عزمها الثبـت وليست تروعهـا الاهـوال
جثمـت في فضـاء ربـي شمـاء وتاهـت كأنها الرئبـال 218

There is a hint of al-Badawi's poetry in the following verse:

تتدجّى الدنيا وتصطخب الارض وترعى فيهـا الشجـون الثقـال 219

Lebanon is a synonym of Paradise:

220 ضفر الثلج والسحائب تاجا واختفى في الضباب ثم تعلق
والروابي توسدت راحة السحب ونامت على وشاح مرقق
والقرى غلفت بأخبية الغيب وضاعت بين الغمام المنمق

His poetry is permeated with a tenderness of emotion and a gentleness of spirit[221] probably unequalled in Syrian poetry before him. Witness the tender noble emotions in these verses on his little daughter:

222 بنيتي طيف تعلقته من صغرى والفينة النائية
صورة امي سربت في دمي وانبثقت من طفلتي باديه
بقامها وشوش في مسمعي وطاف في مهجتي الصابية
اذا تطلعت الى وجهها رأيت امي مرّة ثانية

His poetry keeps to the standards of Syrian poetry in its correct use of language, in its strong phraseology and great clarity. Aḥmad Ḥasan al-Zayyāt noticed this quality in Syrian poetry and, comparing it with Egyptian and Lebanese poetry said that "Syrian poetry' did not become sentimentalised like Egyptian poetry nor effeminate like Lebanese, but remained conservative like the /Syrian/ people themselves...innovating without exaggerating, and without deviating from the true path."[223]

However, al- Aṭṭār was never able to introduce any basic changes in Syrian poetry, despite the fact that he was called, optimistically, "shā'ir al-Shabāb al-Sūri" (poet of Syrian Youth). Although he continued over the years to write poetry which was mainly either on nature or on nationalism, his creativity seemed to diminish greatly with time.[224] The mild Romantic trend which appeared in his verse was now taken on by another Syrian poet, Nadīm Muḥammad, and given greater impetus. Al- ʿAṭṭār published his first diwan Ẓilāl al-Ayyām, in 1948. He has several other collections including Wādi 'l-Aḥlam and Al-Lail al-Mashūr but by the time he was publishing his collections, other poetic events of far greater importance were taking place in the poetic field and his works suffered from a certain amount of obscurity.

On the whole, poetry in Syria seemed to fall within the middle line

as compared to poetry in other Arab countries, i.e. it remained moderate, never taking before the fifties any of the sudden leaps which Arabic poetry in Iraq, al-Mahjar or Egypt, took. In the middle thirties, we see a Syrian writer, ʿAli al-Ṭanṭāwi, complaining in Al-Risālah magazine about literary life in Damascus. "I do not see any signs of life in Damascene men of letters... they are in a state of slumber." He adds later saying that

> "Damascus has no literary magazines except a small magazine called al-Ṭalīʿah,... which has its own special trend... As for those literary pages which adorn some dailies, they are empty blabbing...and please no one who has a good literary taste... Moreover if a writer wrote a book or a novel, he cannot find a publisher, and if he published it at his own expense, he will find no buyers, for Damascus is a city that reads a great deal but does not like to buy books."[225]

ʿAli al-Ṭanṭāwi's concern about literary life in Damascus was not a mere whim but a genuine concern. In 1940 he published another article in Al-Risālah discussing the relation of Damascene literature with Egypt and Lebanon. He says that "Damascus is lost between Lebanon and Egypt. She does not accept the literary concepts of Lebanon, and Egypt does not care about her."[226] He says that many books by Damascene writers were presented to the various Egyptian magazines and to the "great /literary/ critics in Egypt", but most of them were neglected completely, while those that were mentioned had deficient reviews. He goes on to say: "Is it not right, therefore, to complain, remind, hope and wait?"[227]

Another Syrian writer, Wadād al-Sakākīni*, writes about the same subject of literary relations with Egypt, and in the same deferential tone. In a comment on al-Ṭanṭāwi's second article published in the same magazine she says:

> "It might be that literary Egypt...does not care about the literature of other Arab countries which are proud of her and believe in her leadership. It has happened

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* Wadād al-Sakākīni is of Lebanese origin, but Syrian by marriage. She is a story writer and essayist.

> that many people in these countries complained about the neglect of dear Egypt to discuss the culture of her brethren and neighbours and to cherish the admiration which every man of letters...in these countries feels towards her. But what eases the pain is that the leaders of literature in Egypt...admit this neglect."[228]

Then, five years later, al-Sakākīni published another article in Al-Risālah in which she asserted that Syria, after the first world war, opened its eyes on the great cultural awakening of Egypt and followed the footsteps of the Egyptians imitating them in her recent /literary/ revival.[229]

But another Syrian writer commenting on al-Ṭanṭāwi's and al-Sakākīni's discussions, sounds a grim protest on the pages of the same magazine about the imitative character of the Syrian literary revival. He says:

> "Damascus...is an imitator and a follower... She walks on the footsteps of the Egyptians and her people read continuously their works and follow their trends. But, although we admire the Egyptian culture and many Egyptian men of letters, and although we recognise the supremacy and leadership of Egypt, we want our literature and our culture to be independent and wish that our literature should have its special entity and characteristics which differentiate it from other literatures."[230]

This was the position of literature in Syria at the beginning of the forties: hazy, uncertain and lacking in adventure. The forties, however, were the last decade in which poetry in the Arab world was first recognised by its country of origin. The modern poetic movement which flourished in the fifties was to be a unifying movement which was to unite the energy of poets all over the Arab world. In the fifties Arab poets are usually recognised not as Egyptians, Syrians, Iraqians, Lebanese, etc., but as followers of the new movement or as conventional poets. This will be discussed in a coming chapter.

FOOTNOTES

1. Shafīq Jabri, Kurd ʿAlī, pp. 16, 17 and 18.
2. S. Kayyāli, Al-Adab al-ʿArabi ʾl-Muʿāṣir fī Sūriyyah, p.35.
3. Jabri, op.cit., p.27.
4. Ibid, p.29; for an assessment of this Sheikh see Kayyāli, op.cit., pp.78-80.
5. Jabri, loc.cit.,
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid, pp. 11, 12, 19; Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.109.
8. Ibid, pp. 108 [illegible]
9. Shukrı Faiṣal, Al-Ṣaḥāfah al-Adabiyyah, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1959, p.53.
10. Ibid, p.46.
11. Ibid, p.13.
12. Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.35.
13. Ibid.
14. For more comments on the worth of this Academy and its magazine see Faiṣal, op.cit., pp. 52-3.
15. Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.35.
16. Ibid, p.128; Aḥmad al-Jundi, Shuʿarāʾ Sūriyyah, Beirut, 1965, pp.19 & 22; Sāmi al-Dahhān, Al-Shiʿr al-Ḥadith fi ʾl-Iqlīm al-Sūri, pp. 154-6.
17. First published in 1934, see p.156.
18. Al-Jundi, op.cit., p.20.
19. Ibid, pp.73-8; Dahhān, Al-Shiʿr, pp. 39-40.
20. Jundi, op.cit., p.72; Dahhān, Al-Shiʿr, p.37.
21. Jundi, loc.cit.
22. For a list of the books he edited and of his books on literary history and linguistic studies, see a booklet published by the Ministry of Culture and Guidance in Syria entitled Al-ʿUrūbah Tukarrim Dhikrā al-ʿAllāmah Khalīl Mardam Bek, Damascus, 1960, pp. 7-8.
23. Dahhān, Al-Shiʿr, p.108; Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.146.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid; Al-ʿUrūbah, loc.cit.
26. Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.155; Jundi, op.cit., p.34.
27. Jundi, op.cit., p.84; Dahhān, Al-Shiʿr, p.87.
28. In ibid, p.31 for al-Buzm, p.151 for al-Ziriklī and p.195 for Jabri.
29. For a description of the Schools of Damascus in the last decades of the nineteenth century see a very interesting article by Shākir Muṣṭafā entitled "Al-Taʿlīm fī Dimashq, 1879-1890" in Al-Maʿrifah magazine, Damascus, February 1964, pp.46-57.

30. See ibid, p.32, for an account of the study of Buzm and Zirikli with several Sheikhs the most prominent of whom was al-Sheikh Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī (an account of his life and work is to be found in Kayyālī, Al-Adab, pp.74-7). See again Dahhān, Al-Shi'r, p.89 for an account of Mardam's study with other Sheikhs. Jabri, however, seems to be self-taught in Arabic, ibid, pp. 196-7.

31. See ibid, p.32, for a description of such difficulties.

32. See Shākir Muṣṭafā, loc.cit.

33. Jamīl Ṣalībā, Al-Ittijāhāt al-Fikriyyah fī Bilād al-Shām wa Atharuhā fi 'l-Adab al-Ḥadīth, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1958, p.23.

34. Ibid, p.24.

35. For a detailed discussion of nationalistic poetry in Syria see Amjad al-Ṭarābulsi, Shi'r al-Ḥamāsah wa 'l-'Urūbah fī Bilād al-Shām, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1957. However, Ṭarābulsi does not assess this poetry aesthetically, but gives an account of the national events and national occasions in which it was told, a frequent habit among modern literary historians in Arabic.

36. Jundi discusses the lack of love poetry in Jabri and refers it to his extreme seriousness and other causes, op.cit., p.39; see also the book by Jabri himself, Anā wa 'l-Shi'r, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1959, p.38; see also Dahhān, Al-Shi'r, pp.212-4.

37. Shafīq Jabri, Ana wa 'l-Shi'r, p.88.

38. Ibid, p.89.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid, p.93.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid, p.95.

43. Ibid, p.98.

44. Ibid, p.99.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid, p.100.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid, p.127.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid, p.106.

51. This is the date given to the present writer by the poet in an interview in 1960. Jundi, op.cit., gives the date as 1904 (p.54) and Kayyālī, Al-Adab, p.197, gives the date as 1908.

52. As told to the present writer by the poet in the same interview.

53. Ibid; also Jundi, op.cit., pp.54-5.

54. Majallat al-Majma' al-'Ilmi 'l'Arabi, Vol.III, No.6, 191.

55. As told to the present writer by the poet's wife in the same interview.

56. As told to the present writer by him personally in the same interview. "We lived with those diwans and books", he said.
It is interesting to mention here that among the students of al-Sheikh Sulaimān was the father of another prominent modern poet of a younger generation, ʿAli Aḥmad Saʿīd, known as Adūnīs. Adūnīs's mother is first cousin of al-Badawi. (The same interview.)

57. The same interview.

58. Salīm al-Jundi, "Dīwān Badawi 'l-Jabal", Majallat al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmi 'l-ʿArabi, April, 1925, V, iv, 201-3.

59. This diwan is very difficult to find. The present writer had a short access to it by courtesy of its private owner. It contains, among others, a poem in praise of General Gouraud, the conqueror of Damascus in 1920.

60. See Salīm al-Jundi, op.cit., p.202.

61. The same interview.

62. Op.cit.

63. Shākir Muṣṭafa, "Al-Shiʿr fī Sūriyyah", Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.85.

64. Ibid.

65. As told to the present writer in the same interview. The poem is published in Shiʿr quarterly, No.1, Winter, 1957, pp.7-14.

66. The Poetic Pattern, London, 1956, p.138.

67. See ibid., et seq., for references to the poet-author's experience in this, as well as to that of Dylan Thomas and others.

68. Ibid., p.138.

69. Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.207.

70. Ibid., p.208.

71. Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.200.

72. Shiʿr quarterly, No.1, Winter, 1957, p.11.

73. Published without title in Majallat al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmi 'l-ʿArabi, October, 1924, IV, x, 482.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.200.

77. Ibid., p.201.

78. An elegy on the Hashimite King Ghāzi also has an emotional involvement, for the Hashimites are revered by the religious Alawites and al-Badawi has a special reverence for them. The following verse by him is very famous:

هاشميّ الهوى احبّ فما داری وعادی علی هواکم وعودی

Jundi, op.cit., p.56.

79. All the following quotations (under 79) are taken from the manuscript of al-Badawi's poems, which he kindly let the present writer study at his own home.

80. Al-Ādāb, loc.cit.

81. Shiʿr quarterly, No.1, Winter, 1957, p.9.

82. Ibid, p.14.

83. Kayyālı, Al-Ādab, p.200.

84. The Poetic Pattern, pp.92-105.

85. Ibid, p.100.

86. Ibid, p.102.

87. Kayyālī, Al-Adab, p.204.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.

90. Shi'r, Winter, I, 1957, p.10.

91. Ibid, p.13.

92. Ibid, p.8.

93. See Skelton, op.cit., p.105, for a discussion on the use of 'fire' as a symbol in a different poem, which although discussing a different poetry is very relevant to our discussion.

94. This poem, published in al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.85, is a little different from the same poem as written in his manuscript. The present writer patched it together, putting the sign * before verses found only in the manuscript, the sign ** before verses found only in Al-Ādāb, and a star * before verses found in both.

95. Skelton, op.cit., p.102; see also p.93.

96. From the manuscript.

97. Ibid.

98. The quoted words all come from two poems: "Al-Lahabu 'l-Qudsi" and "Al-Sarāb".

99. Dīwān Ibn al-Fārid, Cairo, 1956, p.24.

100. Studies in Islamic Mysticism, Cambridge, 1921, p.199.

101. Dīwān, p.86 et passim.

102. The Mystical Poems of Ibn al-Fārid, Dublin, 1956, p.81.

103. Dīwān, p.73 .

104. Op.cit., p.20.

105. From the manuscript.

106. Ibid.

107. Ibid.

108. Ibid.

109. Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, loc.cit.

110. "The Language of Paradox", in The Language of Poetry, edited by Allen Tate, Princeton, 1942, p.44.

111. Op.cit., p.62.

112. Ibid.

113. See what S. Ḍaif says about this and what he calls "the dogmatic tendency" in Arabic poetry in Dirāsāt, pp.195-200 where he is discussing al-Mahjar poetry.

114. Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.83.

115. From the manuscript.

116. Shi'r, quarterly, 1, Winter, 1957, p.9.

117. Al-Ādāb, loc.cit.

118. Ibid.

119. From the manuscript.

120. Ibid.

121. From the manuscript.

122. Ibid.

123. Ibid.

124. On Ibn al-Fārid's conception of beauty see Muhammad Mustafa Ḥilmi, Ibn al-Fārid wal-Ḥubb al-Ilāhī, Cairo, 1945, p.119.

125. From the manuscript.

126. Ibid.

127. See Jundi, op.cit., p.54.

128. Anthropology, a Human Science, Selected Papers, an Insight Book, U.S.A., 1964, p.222. See also p.221.

129. For a single example this verse:

فان بكى في قفار خلتها لججا وان تنفس عادت كلها يبسا

Dīwān, p.110.

130. فلعل نار جوانحي بهبوبها ان تنطفي واود ان لا تنطفي

Dīwān, p. 95. Translated by Arberry, op.cit., p.60:

"That perchance the fire within my breast may be quelled by their gentle blowing; yet in truth I desire that this fire be never extinguished."

131. صدّ حمى ظماى لماك لماذا وحواك ،قلبي صار منه جذاذا

Dīwān, p.14. Translated by Arberry, op.cit., p.45:

"Why hath a hindrance denied my thirst access to the waters, at a time when my heart hath become broken fragments because of my passion for thee?"

Water, thirst and mirage are merged in the following verses:

وانا الى ماء العذيب وكيف لي بحشاى ، لو يطفي ببرد زلاله

ولقد يجل عن اشتياقي ماؤه شرفا فوا لهفي للامع آله

Diwan, p.79.

132. Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.85.

133. As told to the present writer in an interview with the poet in 1956.

134. The Philosophy of Rhetoric, by I.A. Richards, Oxford University Press, 1936, p.51.

135. Shi'r, Winter, 1, 1957, p.9.

136. See a list of those in Arberry, op.cit., pp.17-19 where he lists about fifteen different figures of speech.

137. Ibid.

138. Ibid.

139. Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.83.

140. Ibid.

141. From the manuscript.

142. As Kayyāli, for example thinks he is, Al-Adáb, p.117.

143. Dīwān al-Jawāhiri, fourth edition, of 1957, p.179.

144. Shi'r, quarterly, Winter, 1957, p.8.

145. From the manuscript.

146. Image and Experience, Studies in a Literary Revolution, London, 1960, p.8.

147. Op.cit., p.218. It is interesting to note that Ṣalība's description of the Romantic school, p.220, is not altogether alien to al-Badawi's experiment: "the supremacy of the impulse of feeling, imagination, passion and fancy over the rational impulse....lyricism and the subjective expression of emotions...". Again Ṣalība's definition of the conventional attitude, p.217, does not always coincide with al-Badawi's poetry. Three points in it do not apply to al-Badawi's contribution : the fact that it is a well-balanced poetry, the fact that it is rational and does not allow free reign to the imagination and the fact that it abhors what is strange and unfamiliar.

148. Ibid, pp.221 and 223.

149. Mujaddidūn wa Mujtarrūn, pp. 175, 177 and 178.

150. Jundi, op.cit., p.113. However, Kayyāli gives the year 1910 as his date of birth, Al-Adab, p.165; see also Dahhān, Al-Shi'r, p.239. On p.242, however, he thinks it might have been a little earlier.

151. Ibid; Kayyāli, loc.cit., Jundi, op.cit., p.115.

152. Ibid, p.110; Kayyāli, loc.cit., Dahhān, loc.cit.

153. Jundi, op.cit., pp.110-111.

154. Ibid, pp.114-5; Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.165; Dahhān, Al-Shi'r, p.249.

155. Ibid, p.241.

156. Ibid.

157. Jundi, op.cit., p.115.

158. From the present writer's personal knowledge.

159. Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.165.

160. Ibid; Jundi, op.cit., p.111; Dahhān, Al-Shi'r, pp. 249 and 250.

161. Ibid.

162. Ibid, pp.256-257, from a quotation by the poet; also Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.166.

163. Dahhān, Al-Shi'r, p.257.

164. Ibid, p.256.

165. Ibid.

166. Ibid.

167. Ibid.

168. In the forties, the poet was frequently invited by the American University of Beirut and other educational institutions to give poetry readings.

169. See also ʿAbbūd, Mujaddidūn, p.175.

170. Examples of these are numerous: "He knew her as an ideal of beauty, then he met her ten years later and found that her beauty had completely disappeared. He felt sad...", Min ʿUmar Abū Rīshah, Shiʿr, Beirut, /1947/, p.17.

Or this: "She heard him declaiming his poem "Al-Naʿsh al-Abyaḍ" and admired him. He looked at her as you would look at a naive child." Ibid., p.20.

Or this: "He knew that it was the first and last night." Ibid.,p.26.

Or this: "The shyness of a virgin is the echo of a suppressed desire, but the love of THIS virgin...", Ibid., p.57.

Or this: "He went to her to kill her." Ibid., p.171.

These introductions as well as his general approach betray a certain amount of naiveness and the limited, rather old-fashioned experience of Abū Rīshah's generation. One can hardly visualise a poet of the present generation writing in the same tone.

171. Abū Rīshah has an emancipated wife and a gracious, easy manner in mixed society. Personal knowledge.

172. Min ʿUmar Abū Rīshah, Shiʿr, p.48.

173. Ibid., p.97.

174. Ibid.

175. Ibid.

176. Ibid., pp.48 and 50.

177. Ibid., p.175.

178. Ibid., p.51.

179. Ibid., p.110.

180. Ibid., p.26.

181. Ibid., pp.31-2.

182. Ibid., p.30.

183. Ibid., p.111.

184. "Abū Rīshah wa 'l-Ḥubb al-Mujazza'", Al-Ādāb, September, 1955, pp.15-20.

185. Ibid., p.19.

186. See for example his poem "Muḥammad", Min ʿUmar Abū Rīshah, Shiʿr, pp.112-124.

187. See for example his poem "Hādhihi Ummati", ibid., pp.154-163; also his poem "Yā Raml ", ibid., pp.164-170, etc.

188. See for example his poem "Yā Shaʿb ", ibid., pp.247-8; see also his allusion to traitors and cowards in his poem, "Khālid", p.240, and his paradoxical explanations of the lethargic national situation, pp.239-40.

189. Ibid., p.146.

190. Ibid., p.149.
191. Ibid., p.153.
192. Ibid., p.163.
193. Ibid., p.130.
194. Ibid., p.131.
195. Ibid., p.132.
196. Ibid., p.137.
197. Ibid., p.149.
198. Ibid., p.165.
199. Ibid., p.152.
200. Ibid., p.135.
201. Ibid., p.208.
202. Ibid., p.163.
203. Mukhtārāt, Beirut, n.d., pp.110-4.
204. Ibid., pp.112-3.
205. Dahhān, Al-Shi'r pp.272-7; Shākir Muṣṭafa, "Al-Shi'r fī Sūriyyah", p.123; Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.167; Daif, Dirasāt, pp.120-35; Jundi, op.cit., pp.122-4.
206. Min 'Umar Abū Rīshah, Shi'r, p.191.
207. Ibid., p.175.
208. Ibid., p.163.
209. Ibid., p.131.
210. Ibid., p.237.
211. Ibid., p.36.
212. Ibid., p.212.
213. Ibid., pp.214-5.
214. Ibid., pp.193-6.
215. Tawfīq Sāyigh, however, believes the allegory to symbolise the poet's personal experiences and his failure in love, "Abū Rīshah wa 'l-Hubb al-Mujazza'", p.20. This assumption, however, seems rather far-fetched.
216. Mukhtārāt, pp.17-18.
217. Ibid., p.16. See the whole poem entitled "Kajorao", ibid., pp.14-26.
218. Quoted by Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.183.
219. Ibid.
220. Ibid.
221. Ibid., p.184. S. Muṣṭafa, "Al-Shi'r fi Sūriyyah", p.84.
222. Kayyāli, Al-Adab, p.186.
223. Quoted, ibid., p.185.
224. S. Muṣṭafa, loc.cit.

225. "Al-Ḥayāt al-Adabiyyah fī Dimashq", No.136, 10th February, 1936, p.215.

226. "Ḥarakat al-Nashr fī Dimashq-ʿAtab wa Bayān", No.365, 1st July, 1940, p.1106.

227. Ibid., p.1107.

228. "Ḥaula 'l-ʿAtab wa 'l-Bayān", ibid., No.369, 29th July, 1940, pp.1238-9.

229. "Adab al-Shām al-Ḥadīth", ibid., No.607, 19th February, 1945, p.174; compare with what I. Adham wrote about the supremacy of the Syrian (including Lebanese) literary awakening, its greater openness to Western influences, its courage and bolder adventurous spirit in "Khalīl Muṭrān, Shāʿir al-ʿArabiyyah 'l-Ibdāʿī", Al-Muqtaṭaf, February, 1939, Vol.94, ii, 164, March, 1939, Vol.94, iii, 302-3 and April, 1939, Vol.94, iv, 411-8; also Gibb, "Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature, I, The Nineteenth Century", B.S.O.A.S., 1926-1928, IV, iv, 752-3.

230. ʿAbd al-Ghani 'l-ʿUṭari, ibid., No.373, 26th August, 1940, p.1367.

SECTION 4: LEBANON

The group of poets who flourished in Lebanon in the second half of the nineteenth century were students of the conservative school of al-Sheikh Nāṣīf al-Yāziji, carried on by his students[1]. The conservative element in their poetry, however, was slowly modified, even before the century was over, by the early acquaintance of poets and men of letters in Lebanon with Western language and literature. But what seemed to remain permanent in the Lebanese literary tradition was the strong linguistic basis behind the Lebanese creative talent. The weakness in the phraseology and style of middle nineteenth century poets like Nuqūlā al-Turk[2] and others of his generation and level was not perpetuated in the poetry of the generations after them. The group of illustrious poets who flourished in Lebanon during the early decades of this century also showed the same strong linguistic basis in their poetry, despite the fact that they established much stronger links with Western poetry. The same phenomenon renewed itself again when real revolutionary innovations were made in poetry in the thirties at the hands of both the Romantics and the Symbolists in Lebanon.

We do not encounter in Lebanon in the twentieth century any poet of note who was not strongly rooted in language and style, as we find in the examples of al-Zahāwī in Iraq, Shukri and Abū Shādi in Egypt, Muṣṭafā Wahbi al-Tal in Jordan, to name but a few. This is why an examination of the linguistic background of these generations of poets is necessary at this stage because it explains the reason why the Lebanese poets who were the earliest in the Arab world to be Westernised and who were mostly Christians and therefore did not usually have the benefit of the Quranic style as a basis in their early education, were able to keep the balance between innovation and Westernisation on the one hand, and a strong Arabic style on the other. We have seen how the treatment of new themes in poetry was a stumbling block for some poets in other Arab countries, and how their

styles flopped and showed signs of weakness and unevenness, as well as a strange mixture of poetic diction alternating between the archaic and the vulgar, as in the case of al-Raṣāfi, for example.

Lebanon's greatest literary pioneers were writers, poets and masters of the language at the same time.[3] We have seen what Nāṣīf al-Yāziji, Buṭrus al-Bustāni and Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq contributed to the Arabic language, grammar and lexicography. The second generation of men of letters after them kept the tradition alive.[4] It may well be said that the first herald of the literary revival in Lebanon was the great interest and efforts made in the study of language,[5] syntax and grammar.

This strong linguistic tradition must have produced a great consciousness of language and of correctness. Lebanon's learned elite, being all closely acquainted with each other as is natural for the elite of any small country, could not but be constantly aware of each other's efforts and achievements.[6] Their interest in language, moreover, might have been enhanced by the bad reputation attributed to the style of Christian writers.[7] The further comparison with the strong linguistic tradition in Damascus shows that the Syrian linguistic tradition was based on an Islamic linguistic tradition which gave it a conservative aspect not only in the use of diction but also in style. The Lebanese men of letters were apparently less rooted in this and at the same time quite open to Western literary influences, a factor which made the linguistic adventure even more of a challenge to them. Their struggle generally was to be able to modernise and create new ways of dealing with new meanings while at the same time keeping to a Classical correctness.

1: CONSERVATISM

A group of poets who flourished at the beginning of this century in Lebanon were called "al-Mukhaḍramūn",[8] because they were at the same time rooted in poetic Classicism in both form and content, but were able to

show in their poetry both the effects of a mixed education and a trend towards modernism. Among these were poets like Salīm Iskandar 'Āzar whose literary circle in Beirut was the meeting place of most of the Lebanese poets of the time,[9] Nuqūlā Fayyāḍ author of Rafīf al-Uqhuwān,[10] and Ba'da al-Aṣīl;[11] Amīn Taqiyy al-Dīn (1884-1947) who was among the first poets to pave the way of poetry towards truth and emotional veracity;[12] Tāmir al-Mallāṭ[13] and his brother Shibli;[14] Nasīb Arslān and his more famous brother Shakīb, Sulaimān al-Bustāni discussed above, and others. Many of these poets were as good as any of the Damascene poets examined above, if not more interesting. They were also superior to many of the Egyptian poets who were writing contemporaneously in Egypt. But while the Syrian poets were, during the first decades of this century the only poets in the field, and while the Egyptian poets, especially the Dīwān group, created a great deal of controversy which imposed their names on a vast Egyptian public, these Lebanese poets, despite their fame, were overshadowed early by greater poetic achievements of the Lebanese creative talent, namely by al-Mahjar contribution and the rise in Lebanon of Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr (Bishārah 'Abdullah al-Khouri). This was enhanced by the relatively quiet literary atmosphere in which they flourished, an atmosphere that was not crowded by feverish attacks and controversy or by loud theorisations on poetry and art, taken directly from Western sources.

Shakīb Arslān:

Before turning to discuss the achievement of Al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr, Lebanon's foremost poet of the period, however, it would be appropriate to examine the work of probably the most conservative poet in Lebanon of the period, al-Amīr Shakīb Arslān (1870-1946) who was not only a poet, but was also a writer and a public figure of great distinction and renown.

Arslān was a Moslem, who, after reading the Quran and memorising a part of it,[15] entered "al-Ḥikmah" School in Beirut. This school was famous for the strong linguistic and literary basis it gave to its students.[16]

It had been founded by the Maronite Bishop Yūsuf al-Dibs, himself a man of great distinction and culture and a writer on history, logic and philosophy.[17] Arslān's teacher at al-Ḥikmah was the famous ʿAbdullah al-Bustānī (1854-1930), another one of the distinguished masters of Arabic in Lebanon and himself a poet and writer on language[18] and a great lover of literature and Classical poetry.[19] It is important to mention both al-Ḥikmah School and ʿAbdallah al-Bustānī because several of the Lebanese poets and men of letters of Arslān's generation and after were students of al-Bustānī at al-Ḥikmah.[20] Among these was also the illustrious poet Bishārah al-Khouri.

Arslān studied some English early[21] and studied French at al-Ḥikmah[22] and after leaving this school entered al-Madrasah al-Sulṭāniyyah in Beirut where he applied himself to Turkish.[23] Early in his life he formed a friendship with al-Sheikh Muḥammad ʿAbdū, the great Egyptian religious reformer, who had been exiled to Beirut.[24] This friendship left a great impact on Arslān and affected his career greatly.[25]

Arslān is far more important as a historian, a writer on Arab unity and other national causes, a defender of Islam, a translator, a thinker and an essayist.[26] In fact, he might himself have been more interested in his achievement as a prose writer than as a poet.[27] Some time during his career, he acquired the title of "Amīr al-Bayān"[28] for his firm, impressive, highly rhetorical style in prose. Despite his readings in French,[29] his poetry was deeply rooted in Classicism. This may be due to the fact that although he did achieve a powerful poetic style,[30] he was never a spontaneous poet. He is quoted as having said: "I seldom wrote poetry out of a desire to do so ... and in obedience to my own wish. I have only a few poems written in this way. This is why the greatest number of my poems are elegies on friends and great men ..."[31]

His ideas on poetry were also very conservative and, unlike the clear captivating logic of his other arguments, quite unconvincing. Defending the Classical method in poetry he wrote: "If 'old' is a quality

that corrupts poetry, then Homer should be rejected, for he is the oldest of poets. To those who keep on talking about old and new in poetry and who claim that every age has its school, we say that schools exist in everything except in poetry, for poetry's school is the heart, and its medium is the spirit ... The human spirit never changes ...

"This about poetry in general. As for Arabic poetry which you want to Occidentalize, it cannot be [poetry] unless it is suited to the taste of the Arabs and their attitudes [towards life] and harmonised with the ways of their language and is related to their life."[32] He then declared that he did not understand the language which the [occidentalized] poets used in their poetry.[33]

Despite ʿAbbūd's good testimony about him as a poet, Arslān left hardly any direct influence through his poetry on the following generations of poets in the Arab world. For neither his style, which reminds the reader of al-Kāẓimi's "Bedouin Style", nor his theme which was connected mainly with great events in the Arab world or with elegies on prominent men, suited the changing taste of the following generations, a taste which, despite Arslān's protest, was to undergo great and unforseen changes in the following decades.

2 : THE CHANGE OF POETIC SENSIBILITY

(i) Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr

Bishārah ʿAbdallah al-Khouri, known as al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr,[34] (1884?-1968)[35] quickly gained fame on a pan Arabic scale.[36] He, too, was a student of ʿAbdallah al-Bustāni at al-Ḥikmah[37] and, because of a deep and more acute poetic sensibility was able to reflect early the influence of his mixed education. A lyrical poet of the highest degree, Classicism in poetry freed itself at his hands a great deal from its formality and rigidity and flowed with an easy grace and harmony. This is one of the earliest qualities of his poetry. Labaki says he began writing in 1909.[33]

He quotes one of the earliest, probably the earliest known poem which Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr read to his friends of al-ʻĀzar literary circle.[39] This is a love poem in stanza form, which begins with this stanza:

عشت فالعب بشعرها يا نسيم واضحكي في خدودها يا نجوم
من ملاك في بريتيها مقيم جسد ظاهر وروح كريم
ومحيا فيه ترى الحسن حيا [40]

This is interesting for it shows some of al-Akhṭal's most important poetic attributes: the flowing music, the harmonious syllables and words, the poet's application of natural objects like the breeze, the stars, and in other stanzas the night, the sun, the waves, to woman's beautiful features. Another attribute of this early poem, which his biographers and critics have not remarked upon, is the link it seems to have with some Lebanese folk poetry. Its language, its choice of rhymes: شعرها قطعة من الليل، والخد قبلته شمس الضحى فتورد [41] their order of aaaa b, cccc b, dddd b, etc., where the last verse of each stanza ends in the same rhyme, muwashshaḥ like, are very reminiscent of Lebanese folk songs. It is impossible, however, to raise this suggestion to the level of an argument here, because of limited sources on the matter and fear of deviation from the main course of this work. However, reference to similarities with folk poetry must recur here and suggestions regarding the links of the formal poetry in Lebanon with folk poetry must be made, even if the subject cannot be fully discussed. From the point of view of the above-mentioned poem, the suggestion seems supported by the great simplicity of language used in the poem,* a simplicity which did not lose its poetic poignancy:

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* The suggestion of Karam[42] that journalism in which the author was engaged for many years right at the beginning of his career, accounts for the simplicity of his poetic language is valid to a degree; for journalism might tend to lose for the poet the lustre of the poetic language. However, the poet's interest in Al-Aghani, which is another suggestion by Karam,[43] might have contributed more towards the special nature of the poet's art, because of its simple language and the kind of poetry collected in it, mostly graceful songs of high lyricism.

شعرهـــا قطعـــة من الليل ،والخـــد قبلتـــه شمس الضحى فتـــــورد
وعلى صدرها ،متـى تتنهـــــــــد ، موجـــة هـــزت الصغيرين في المهد
فاشرأبّا كمـــن تخوّف شـــيّا

Although, strictly speaking, this is a modern muwashshah, it is far less formal and carries more the spirit of Lebanese folk poetry, in general.*

Other poems of the early period are still among his most famous, poems like "Hind wa Ummuhā" (1914),[44] "Min Ma'āsī 'l-Ḥarb" (1917),[45] "'Urwah wa 'Afrā'" (1917),[46] and a partly translated poem "al-Maslūl" (1919).[47] It is interesting to note that he resorted to translations from French at the beginning of his poetic career, an activity he seemed to abandon in his more mature years.[48]

From its start, al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's poetry showed a solid linguistic basis which was in no way diminished even when he translated from French. It also contained a large part of his vocabulary, a vocabulary which borrowed a great deal from nature and the elements, especially from the beauties of the natural scene in which Lebanon is so rich: the sea, the waves, the moon, the sun, the stars, the flowers, the dew, the breeze, etc. The main quality of his poetry was immediately established, right from the first poem. And as his poems followed one another it came to be realised that al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr was both a great lyrical poet[49] and a connoisseur and lover of beauty. He never abandoned these qualities. His vocabulary might have become more complex with the years, his images more intricate, but his search for beautiful similes and images was seen with time to be an authentic and passionate trait. The feeling, however, that he hunts for his words and probably culls them remains with the reader throughout the reading of his poetry.

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* His famous poem sung by Egypt's foremost man singer, entitled "Yā wardi mīn yishtirīk"[50] seems rather to be an artistically contrived song composed at the request of the singer than a result of an affinity with Lebanese folk songs. However, it does suggest a certain flexibility of the poetic tools, as Karam seems to imply.[51]

The strong education at al-Ḥikmah was blended early with a good basis in French which al-Ḥikmah is known to have given its students.[52] This was later augmented by his private readings in French poetry.[53] In his career as a journalist he had much opportunity, too, to nourish this culture, for Al-Barq, the newspaper he founded and edited in 1908,[54] was the platform of "a literary movement which aspired, before the First World War, to emerge from the boundaries of the old and familiar".[55] It published the works of leading poets and men of letters of the period in Lebanon and al-Mahjar,[56] as well as translations of French Romantic literature.[57] This newspaper which became after the war a literary weekly,[58] was one of the bridges by means of which Romanticism was introduced into Lebanon either directly through these translations, or indirectly through the Mahjar literature published in it.[59] One of the first poets to benefit from this medium was Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr himself.

But al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr never really plunged into modern Arab Romanticism. A Romantic element was stirred up in him by his readings in Romantic poetry and probably by the general changing spirit of the age, but, perhaps owing to a solid Classical basis as well as to his living in an environment where Classicism in literature was still very strong, it led him to make links with Classical Romanticism, and many elements in his poetry are very reminiscent of some Classical poets of earlier periods, especially the Umayyad. This is shown to be true by the interest he showed early in the tragic love story of 'Urwah Ibn Ḥizām, the Umayyad love poet, and later by the story of "'Umar wa Nu'm" (1931).[60] This early affinity with this kind of Classical poetry (itself a step from the reading of panygeric poets of the Abbasid period who were highly esteemed by the nineteenth century pioneers) led him to the expression of the same trends of feelings typical in Classical Romanticism.[61] Firstly, he complained incessantly of the sorrow of parting with the beloved:

سقيت مرارات الحياة فلم اجد كمثل الذى يسقيه من كفك الهجر [62]

and this:

63 ايها الغائب الذى في فـــؤادى حاضر ،كيف حال قلبـك بعـــدى ؟

And continually he spoke of suffering, emaciation and imminent death:[64]

65 نبه جفونـــك لحظة تبصر فتـــى لم يبق منه عـــواك الا الاعظمـــا

and this:

66 قلب بخيـــط رجائـــه يتعلـــق قعد العياء به وقل المشفـــق
نادالك والرمق الاخـــير بصـــدره امل يـودع ،او شـــراع يغـــرق
مدى يمينـك كالمسيـــح فربـــيا بعث الدفين وعاد حيـــا يـــرزق

And constantly he turned to longing and memories[67] :

63 انا مـذ اتيت النهـر آخر ليلـــة كانت لنـا ، ذكرته انشـــادى
وسألتـه عن ضفتيـه ، الم يـــزل لي فيهما ارجوحتـي ووســـادى

And he expressed repeatedly the deep, traditional lament for passing youth:

69 خليلـــيّ ،كيف انسى عهد كنـــا وقد نسج الشباب لنا وحاكـــا
....
ذكرتك تملأ الآفـــاق باسمـــي فتنفحـني الزهـــور شذا شذاكـــا
....
فيا ذكرى الاحبـــة ، مـات قلـــبي فاني لا احس لـــه حراكـــا

and this famous heartbreaking lament:

70 الهوى والشبـاب والامـل المنشـــود توحـي ، فتبعث الشعر حيـــا
والهوى والشبـاب والامـل المنشـــود ضاعـت جميعهـــا من يديـــا

But al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr often plucks up courage and defies fate and old age:

71 لي في قرار الكأس بعد بقيـــة سمحـت بها الآلام للعـــواد

and this most poignant example:

72 انا لا اشيع بالدمـوع صبابـــتي لكن الف جناحهـــا بجناحـــي
....
دعني وما زرع الزمـان بمفرقـــي ما كنت ادفن في الثلـوج صداحـــي
من كان من دنيـاه ينفض راحـــه فانا على دنيـاى اقبض راحـــي
اني افدّى كل شمس اصيلـــة حذر المغيب ،بالف شمس صبـــاح

The links with the spirit of folk poetry in Lebanon can also be suggested here because it carries the same themes and longings.[73] In fact the whole Arab world finds in its traditional folk songs a means towards the expression of these themes which seem to be an integral part of its emotional heritage.

All the writers on al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr feel that his poetry combines two poetic sensibilities.[74] In assessing the novelty of his poetry one has to compare him with poets of his own generation. To the modern reader, versed in the new concept of modern poetry in the fifties and sixties, his poetry seems quite traditional. However, it is in fact a stepping stone between neo-Classicism and the more modern experiments of Arabic poetry in the thirties and later.[75] For despite the traditional aspect of his Romanticism, as well as its limited emotional freedom, it may well be said to have helped to pave the way for the more authentic and more developed Romanticism of Abū Shabakah and the other Lebanese Romantics.[76] His greatest service to Arabic Romanticism in Lebanon, as Labaki aptly puts it, was that in his expression of different experiences and emotions, he did not "deviate from the spirit of the /Arabic/ language".[77] This is a great achievement unattained by any of this poet's contemporaries who helped to develop modern Arabic poetry or to push it a few steps further towards a more modern sensibility. Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr preserved an even strength of phraseology and a mastery of language throughout his career, hardly faltering in this respect.[78] But this was not all. He was further able to charge his words, not with tension, but surely with an emotional weight, clothe them with veneer and polish[79] and pour them out with a melodiousness[80] which immediately raised him to a high level. His poetry was a great foundation on which later poets, Lebanese and otherwise, who were known for their linguistic strength and choice diction, were able to build. Of Classicism he preserved the form and structure of the poem, many of the Classical expressions, themes, attitudes and rhymes,[81] its clarity[82] and often its oratorical resonance.[83]

Having flourished in the era when the poet was in the public eye and played the role of the national spokesman and bard at all important public events,[84] al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's immense preoccupation with the theme of woman and love of life was an immediate change. This should not lead to

the mistaken idea that love poetry and the description of woman's beauty were absent from Arabic poetry at the time. But the theme was followed mostly in affected manner, hardly revealing the poet's personal involvement in love. Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr expressed the feelings of love with greater intensity and directness,[85] if not without often affecting the love situation.[86] But despite his obsession with the theme, an obsession beautifully expressed in his verse:

87 ولـــد الهـوى والخمـر ليلـة مولدى وسيحملان معي على الواحـــي

despite this obsession, he did not relinquish the traditional role of the poet as public spokesman, as the voice of his people. If one should make a rough cross-section of his poetry, one might briefly summarise his themes to be love and nationalism. In this his poetry is in line with a simultaneous preoccupation with woman and nationalism characteristic of the poetry of a younger generation of poets in the Arab world, of the generation of ʿUmar Abū Rīshah in Syria, of Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān in Palestine, ʿAli Mahmūd Ṭāhā in Egypt and Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbi in Tunisia, to name but a few. However, these poets of the younger generation were more personally involved in their national poetry than al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr ever was, for he belonged, in his national poetry, to the generation of the neo-Classicists who made of these poems occasions for public appearances and were capable of writing on diverse themes to suit the occasion.

The first theme in his poetry, that of woman and love, was linked with love of life, and of beauty:

88 وانا الذى غذّى الجمال بشعـــره وحنـــا عليـــه سافـــرا وملثمـــا

and this:

89 رفعوا منـــك للجمـــال الهـــا وانحنـــوا سجـــدا على قدميـــك

and this:

90 بأخـي هوى متماسـك في اضلعـــي سمح ،على شيح الجمـال مفـــرق
شقـــت،مرائره اســـى وتأوهـــا ان فاتـــه الحسن الذى لم يخلـــق

It was also linked with the love of youth, as we have seen, and with nature, a theme which permeates the whole of his poetry, and with the love of wine and drinking:

91 حكمة الدهر ان نعيش سكارى فاجمعا لي الكؤوس والاوتارا
واجلواها دينا ممتّعة الحسن كما تجلوان احدى العذارى

In this poetry, so fascinated with life, beauty and youth, with woman and wine, a loftiness of spirit and of outlook towards woman miraculously saves the poet from indulgence and sensuality. If he is not a Platonic poet, he is surely not a sensual one. A veil of innocence covers the desire[92] and transforms it into an emotion of great beauty and charm. The poet's hedonistic trend as expressed magnificently in the following:

93 فانهب العيش لا ابالك ،نهبا واطّرح عنك وجهك المستعارا
لست مهما عمرت غير جناح حط في الروح لحظة ثم طارا

and other places, has a robustness and a gentleness about it which keep life in its well-known and accepted perspective. It elevates where it loves. This will become a tradition in love poetry which will be followed by other Arab poets, but especially by some Lebanese. However, it is by no means his own creation. It is a tradition in folk poetry which characterises the zajal of folk poets like the famous Rashīd Nakhlah (d.1940?), the "prince" of Lebanese folk poets,[94] and others. Such is the sentiment in the following by Rashīd Nakhlah:

95 ان بكيت الكون من اجلك بكي وان ضحكت اهتز عرش المملكي
وكل شيء ربي خلق لطف وجمال اعطى البشر غراط والبقوي لك

and this:

96 ربي خلقها وشال ايدو واكتفى ذوق وحلا ولطف وذكا وعفّي ووفا

and this:

97 لما الشمس عتقت في سماها وشاف ربي الدني بتظلم بلاها
خلق محبوبتي تتنوب عنها ووهبها مثل ما بدها وعطاها

There is no scope for many more examples of such folk poetry here.* But it is of paramount importance to attempt to establish the relationship between this trend in the formal poetry of al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr and folk poetry. This will also help to understand the same trend in the poetry of Sa'īd 'Aql, later on. This relationship between the two kinds of poetry in Lebanon did not pass without comment by Lebanon's master critic, Marūn 'Abbūd. Discussing another Lebanese poet, he speaks of the Lebanese environment in which the poets grew. "People wonder", he says, "at the number of good poets we have in this generation. /He is writing in the thirties./ But if they should contemplate the Lebanese colloquial songs which our youngsters are accustomed to hear day and night, they would understand the secret of our poetic gift."[98] Anwar al-Ma'addāwī, an Egyptian contemporary critic, discussing the form of expression and the trends in the themes of Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's poetry, finds him a genuine original, "a type apart from the other poets, neither having the characteristics of Abū Māḍi nor of 'Alī Maḥmūd Ṭāhā,** even though holding to the same line of innovation as they."[99] It is of the foremost importance, he insists, that every poet has his own flavour and his particular colour[100]... But al-Ma'addāwī has drawn his conclusions about al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr, apparently,

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* Recent Lebanese folk poetry is more sophisticated and has greater variety as in the poetry of Mishāl Ṭrad. However, the same tender sentiment persists:

يا مريـــم العـــــدرا
عطيني تعيـــش بهـــا الحيـــاة
تلات اربـــع دقايـــق ســـكـــــوت
بهـا الفيـــة الخضـــرا
مـن عمر خمس بنفسجـــــات
ع صدرنـــا وادبـــل وموت

101

** There is no apparent reason why al-Ma'addāwī chose these two poets for comparison.

without any knowledge of the local poetic background of Lebanon. What he finds different in him from contemporary formal poetry in general are precisely those attributes found in the folk poetry in Lebanon when the poet started writing and perhaps long before,[102] and hence he is not as original as Ma'addāwi thinks.

The second theme in al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's poetry, that of nationalism, was a public and not a personal involvement. His participation in public events and national memorial celebrations[103] on which occasions he often represented Lebanon, embraced the whole of the Arab world.[104] This involvement in national themes was in line with the whole concept of the poetic art in the early decades of this century when his attitudes were formed. Hence it was not a new trend in his poetry,[105] but was related to the platform. In fact, the relationship of poetry to the platform was taken for granted by Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr:

ثلاثة ما عشت عاشت للهوى الحب ثم الشعر ثم المنبر [106]

The platform, however, and the demands it has for a resonant, dogmatic style, did not discourage this poet, so fascinated by the natural scene from including even in his most serious and often sombre topics, descriptions of nature or themes relating to his own preoccupation with beauty and the love of life.[107] He begins his elegy on Gibrān with an overture on wine and the love of life.[108] On another public occasion, that of erecting a statue in honour of Fāris Musharriq at Ḍuhūr al-Shuwair,[109] he dedicated the greater part of the poem to extolling the beauty of nature in Ḍuhūr al-Shuwair.[110] His famous hā'iyyah in which he extolls love, life, and wine on the one hand and Damascus on the other, ending it by chiding his own country, Lebanon, for neglecting him, was first intended as a eulogy for Shukri al-Q#uwatli, on the occasion of his presidency of the Syrian republic. The poet later purged it of the political references as well as of any praise of al-Quwwatli and published the rest as a whole in his dīwān Al-Hawā under the title of "Wulida 'l-Hawā wa 'l-Khamr".[111] In his

second diwān Shi'r, however, he split the purged poem into three smaller poems.[112] The ethics of this procedure[113] is not within the scope of this work, but the procedure has a different significance, important to this discussion. He may have omitted the political reference with what it must have contained of eulogy to al-Quwwatli because he might have felt that the tide in the poetic concept of the fifties, when he published his first diwān, was strongly against all kinds of eulogies to men of power. The possibility that he might have omitted this part because al-Quwwatli was by 1953 already out of favour is a moral issue which would be out of place here, but it seems more reasonable to believe that al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr omitted these sections under the influence of the new poetic concepts, for he also neglected to include his well rewarded eulogy of King 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl Su'ūd and that of King Fārūq of Egypt in his published works. Another poetic concept which might have prompted him to split this poem and others in his second diwan is that of the unity of the poem. So much insistence on this was made in the fifties by nearly all the modern writers on poetry that it would have been surprising if the poet had not paid attention to it when he published his diwan in 1961 and had not split the poem according to themes, for in fact his poems often lack in unity, even of theme.[114]

It was in this year, 1961, that he was 'crowned' the Prince of poets in Beirut, by representatives from many Arab countries.[115] He and his generation have been able to carry on a tradition in poetic formalities and pompousness which was unacceptable to the avant garde poets and critics of the fifties. Had he been less bound to the traditions of 'public poetry' and the ambition for loud public recognition of him as a foremost poet, he might have concentrated on that kind of poetry which he could perfect most.[116] For it was the platform poetry which trapped him into his worst pitfalls as a poet. His involvement with this kind of poetry prevented him from further experiments and tied him to the same faults of the neo-Classicists, such as the tendency to exaggerate;[117] to dabble in absurdities[118] and to

let his poetry sound hollow with empty resonance.[119] This was perhaps why Abū Shabakah believed that he "sang what he was compelled to sing, not what he felt like singing",[120] a remark highly exaggerated, if one examined his poetry as a whole. But ʿAbbūd divined the secret of his weakness better when he showed how he, in his elegy on Shauqi, had cared more for the audience than for art.[121]

A critic who studies al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's poetry must surely be aware that he did not resort to platform poetry for lack of other poetic methods to express his clear if limited vision of the conditions and events of his time. For he was quite capable of writing narrative poems, a method he often resorted to at the beginning of his career (in the fashion of Muṭrān) to avoid a direct treatment of the subject for fear of exposure to coercion.[122] However, he sometimes did write directly about subjects of humane importance.[123]

But the real contribution of al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr to modern Arabic poetry lies in his more personal poetry. A great elegance of style,[124] present in all his poetry, is particularly imposing in these poems, which are usually shorter and often written in muwashshaḥ form of great finesse[125] and melodiousness.[126] ʿAql ascertains that right from the beginning he was the greatest love poet /of his generation/.[127] He was subsequently called the poet of "love and youth". But although it was at his hands that Lebanese poetry accomplished the decisive change from the rather objective method of the neo-Classicists to the kind of subjectiveness called for by Shukri and the rest of the Dīwān Group in Egypt, he remained at the periphery of adventure in the realms of the emotions. There is little depth in his poetry, little preoccupation with the problems of existence,[128] and rarely any sense of the tragic in life,[129] an attitude that is expected in a great poet who lives long and passes through the many experiences, upheavals and sorrows of life in Lebanon and the Arab world during this century.[130] His was a fleeting spirit that could suffer, and that could

feel the misery of others, but only to a certain extent. The deep, personal involvement in the greater issues of life is not easily met with in his poetry, even when he speaks of love. There is no profound experience[131] of this great emotion, and despite what we know of his dedication to love, one does not feel that there is a great seriousness behind the insistent talk, even behind the ardent tone in verses like this:

فحرقـــنا نفوسنـــــا في جحـــيم من القبـــل [132]

For as the poet grew into manhood, then into middle age and finally into old age, the theme remained static, revolving all the time around the image of a beautiful damsel, who never grew to maturity, never lost her childlike innocence, never gave lavishly, but was for ever illusive, light-hearted and almost uninvolved. His partings with her were endless, his longing for her traditional. This attitude is not particularly alien to the culture in which al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr had lived, a culture in which a man is never too old, supposedly, for a happy and fleeting experience with a damsel that enjoys youth and beauty, and in which a concentration on the physical qualities of a woman is predominant.[133]

This is why his poetry was, and still is in many circles of the Arab world, so popular,[134] for it suited the emotional attitude of the mass of the readers. It is a poetry that springs from the heart, not only of the poetic tradition, but also of Arab culture. The several little poems which were put to music and sung by the Arab world's most famous singers are memorised by millions of Arabs, even up to the present time.

Moreover, al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr did not exemplify the spirit of Arab culture only in his conscious involvements but also in his unconscious attitudes. Aside from commendable attitudes like his tenderness towards innocent maidens, he has in him some of the regrettable feelings, like those of fakhr. He was not able to liberate himself from this attitude and verses of great boastfulness appeared in his poetry:

135 ورفعـــــت بي عرش الهـــــوى ورفعـــت فوق العرش بندك
واعـــــدت للشعـــــراء سيدهـــم . وللعشـــــاق عبـــــدك

and this, in an elegy on a Bishop:

136 اوحيـد امتـه تقي وهدايـــــــة علا سمعت وحيدها* انشـــــادا

The image in his poetry did undergo some change from the traditional simile, although only to a limited degree, for he remained a directly descriptive poet.[137] However, the direct simile often gives way to a metaphor in which a direct replacement of the object compared by the object with which it is compared is effected.[138] This is usually an object of beauty taken from nature. Nature[139] is continuously lending its treasures to the physical qualities of the poet's damsels. The eyes are borrowed from the does and the neck from the deer, the hair from the night, the cheeks from roses, the lips from anemonies, the breasts from the pomegranates,[140] etc. This direct borrowing from nature is again similar to that of the Lebanese folk-lore. When al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr says:

141 وتمتمت نجمة في اذن جارتهـــا لما رأتهـا وجنـت عند مرآهـــا
انظرن يا اخوتا هذى شقيقتنـــا فمن تراه على الغبراء القاهـــا؟

Rashid Nakhlah says:

142 يا ميـن بحكمـو بدينـــي وبدينهـــا ولا يكون من ديني ولا من دينهـــا
قلـت القمر ـ قالوا القمر لا تأمنـــوا في مشابهة بالوجه بينو وبينهـــا
. . . . . .
رجمت قلت الشمس الها ،أمنـــوا قالوا مهي شمس الصباح بعينهـــا

And when al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr says:

143 انت ذوبت في محاجرهـــا السحـــر ورصعت باللآلـــي فاهـــــا
انت عسلـــت ثغرها فقلـــوب النـــاس نحـــل اكمامهـــا شفاهـــــا

Rashīd Nakhlah says:

144 وسنـان لولو وشعر ساجد عالقـــدام يشفع بقلـب المبتلي ويقول حـــرام
. . . . . .
ولسان احمـر مخملي عليه انعقـــد شهد اللمى حتى يصير حلو الحكـي

This folk poetry, like that of al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's early poetry shows great authenticity, because many similes spring from the living language of the people and their images, similes like these:

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* Meaning himself.

145 عيون زرق ، شفاف رق من الـــورق وسنان لولو وشعر دبس بعلبكـــي
. . . . . .
وما بيعرفش الشعر لولا الابتســـام فستق مشقـق ريحتـــو كالمستكـــي
فستق مشقق ريحتو ند وزبـــــد وما بينطق حـــرف الا بالزبـــد

The lips as thin as paper, the blonde hair like Ba'alback molasses, the hair kneeling at her feet [i.e. very long], the mouth like pistache nuts with a fragrance like mastic and nadd, as shown in the above examples, and further the neck like that of pigeons,[146] the breast like a cotton field,[147] the fingers like pencils,[148] all are living Lebanese similes taken straight from the mouth of the people. This is interesting because it shows the greater vitality of folk poetry when compared with that kind of formal poetry which takes its metaphor mostly from the Classical.

One could perhaps say that there is a riot of nature in al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's poetry, where nature, as Karam says, "is clothed with shapes, colours and aesthetic values, as well as moods".[149] Karam believes this to have been the result of the influence of French poetry and of Gibrān,[150] thus overlooking the fact that this affinity with the aesthetic aspect of nature is a predominantly Lebanese quality found in very large degrees in folk poetry. We find it simultaneously in the poetry of both Rashīd Nakhlah and al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr.[151] It remains a "physical" love relation in which the external aesthetic aspects of Nature are loved, sung and described - much as the love relation with woman in this poetry remains bound to those external aesthetic aspects. This is most interesting, for by this similar attitude towards the aesthetic qualities of both woman and Nature the replacement of these qualities one for the other and their continuous exchange is effected with ease and directness. One fails to see the influence of Gibrān's metaphysical approach to nature and his mystical wanderings on this poet's verse, staunchly alien to any metaphysical exploration.[152]

Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's approach and his use of metaphor did undergo some change with the years. Although he remained primarily a poet of

portrait and image, delineating his objects externally, and hardly delving into the heart of an experience, his poetic power showed greater vigour with the years and a greater grasp on originality and expression. At their best his images are clear and limpid. Sometimes they are extremely beautiful; like the following in his poem on al-Zahāwi:

آليـــت اقتحـم الجحـــيم على جـواد من ذنوبـــي 153

in this there is a direct reference to al-Zahāwi's poem on hell. The following is another example:

الحب مذبوح على اقدامهـــا والحسن في الحاظها يكـــبر 154

and this on a lost hope:

امل كالسمـــاء في بسمـــة الفجـــر وفي موكب الرياض الفواغـــم 155
فر مذ مدت الاكـف اليـــه كفرار النعـــيم من كف حالـم

A tendency towards the sensuous image is manifested in his poetry. An inner thirst, insatiable as it were, is felt to lurk behind those love images granted to things like Palestine:

فلسطين يا حلـم الانبيـــاء ويا خمرة الانفس الشاعـــرة 156
حملنا لـك المهـج الظامئـات واصديـة الـقبل الطاهـــرة

and this to the same country:

ان جرحها سال من جبهتهـــا لثمته بخشـوع شفتانـــا 157

and this verse on Lebanon:

قبلت باسمك كل جرح سائـــل وركزت بندك عاليا في الســاح 158

This tendency[159] is an enriching element in his poetry. It might have influenced the more modern trend in some poetry of the fifties and after to use more sensuous images which borrowed a great deal from the love metaphor. However, it will remain extremely difficult ever to decide such an issue. But this apparent trend in his poetry was not able to stand in the way of the flux of abstract images which invaded Arabic Romantic poetry in the thirties and after. Even before that we have seen how Fawzi al-Ma'lūf in al-Mahjar resorted to abstractions. The thirties and forties will be flooded with poetry having abstract images.

A Christian, al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr did not show a great affinity with the Christian theme or any definite Christian ideals. His spirit on the whole was that of Arab culture in general, and his infrequent references to Christian matters[160] or to Christ himself were passed unheeded by a predominantly Moslem audience. However, ʿAbbās's suggestion that there is a Christian influence in images in which wounds are kissed and touched with love is plausible,[161] as in the above examples and in this:

162 قم الى الابطال نلمس جرحهم لمسة تسبح في الطيب يدانا

But they might also have sprung from the poet's sensuous nature in which the rapport between the object and subject is often carried out through a sensuous act of love.[163]

Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's images, however, can be really bad at times, as in this verse in which Ṣannīn is compared to a white candle:

164 وابو الربى صنين قام كشمعة بيضاء تمعن في السحاب وترتقي
يتوقد النجم السني برأسها فترى بوادر دمعها المترقرق

or this about tears flowing in abundance over the cheeks:

165 يتعثرن تارة بالذى جف وحينا يطفون طفو الحباب

and this about a courageous soul:

166 صداق العلى ،نفس تسيل على الظبى مرصعة الاكمات بالبسمات

or on strife, this affected image:

167 وردة من دمنا في يده لواتي النار بها حالت جنانا

Bishārah al-Khouri, al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr, remains an important figure not only in Lebanese but also in Arabic poetry in the period between the two World Wars. The belated appearance of his two dīwāns (1953 and 1961) might have lost for them a warmer reception[168] they were sure to have received if they had appeared in the thirties or forties, but to many readers he still remains one of the foremost favourites. This is remarkable in view of the fundamental changes that have taken place not only in the social and political structure of the Arab world during the last two decades,

but also in the very psyche of the people. For al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's poetry is without a real human problem to examine,[169] without any direct or indirect moral ideal,[170] and without much depth or spiritual exploration. It is saved, however, by brilliant if fleeting visions of beauty, by a rich emotional lyricism, and a powerful poetic expression. Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's craftsmanship remains one of the most sophisticated in this century. He brought poetry in Lebanon to a more subjective level and charged it with a jet of personal emotions. To a certain extent, he anticipated the poetic experiments that were to come after him. There is a great deal from which the modern poet, fortified against flippancy and lightness of approach and attitude can benefit in his poetry; particularly from his rhythmic technique and his limpid powerful expression.

(ii) Amīn Nakhlah

Amīn Nakhlah (1901) is usually linked with Bishārah al-Khouri and has enjoyed fame and literary recognition since the late twenties of this century. He is the son of the famous Rahsīd Nakhlah, the foremost folk poet of Lebanon at the turn of this century. He studied first with the illustrious ʿAbdullah al-Bustāni at the "Baṭririkiyyah" College in Beirut where he also studied French. Then he read law at the Syrian University in Damascus and later did further law studies at Beirut. In his more adult years he studied caligraphy with the famous Turkish caligraphor, Ḥāmid Bek, as well as some painting and music. He was very fond of Western literature and read widely French and other Western literature translated into French or Arabic. He also read a great deal in Greek literature and philosophy (in translation), of which he is very fond.[171]

A public figure, advocate, journalist, member of Parliament and politician, he is also a famous writer of literary prose. Out of the fourteen or more works he has written (literary, linguistic, legal, historical, etc.) he has three collections of poems: Daftar al-Ghazal (1952)

Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd (1962), and Layālī al-Raqmatain (1966).

Amīn Nakhlah is a confirmation of the poetic tradition of al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr, of rhetorical structure and the deliberate, painstaking sculpture of words. His strong linguistic basis is emphasised by most commentators. M. Saqr asserts that in "poetic style and in the /capacity/ to capture fresh and rare words, he is among the foremost creative poets".[172] Norin and Tarabay emphasise this too, saying that "he is one of the rarest modern poets to possess a true consciousness of the subtleties of the Arabic language and of the profound sense of its verb".[173] They regard him nearest to the Parnassians[174] who are famous for their perfection of the poetic word. But despite the wider poetic vocabulary he introduced into modern poetry, he remains well within the Classical tradition. In fact the Classical form and the Classical expression are barricaded in his poetry with a watchful, almost fanatical care - and it all seems as if each word had been tested, weighed, measured and seasoned before it was finally allowed to exist as a part of the poem. It is sometimes as if the words were studied in isolation and did not impose themselves on the poet in the context of the poem, so that some of them do not have what Edwards P.J. Corbett calls "a national currency",[175] or an emotional linkage with the reader. * Such words, however, are not frequent in his work, but all through one can sense the craftsmanship, the close intent on coinage and on the perfection of the poetic diction. This is illustrated by him in the following explanation of the creative process:

" وان لهذا الذى يلقى في الروع في محاريب الفكر الها ،هو آله الاسرار ،لا ينفض للشعراء كتمات صدره ، وانما يوحي اليهم بالاجادات ولا يوحي باسرارها. فيغوص واحدهم في نفسه على الشطرة من البيت ، او على جانب من الشطرة ،ويكدّ في الغوص ما شاء الله ان يكد ،حتى تقع له اللؤلؤة ،وكانما قذف بها قاذف من الغيب ... فلا يعلم صاحبنا اهي من النشدان للمراد ، واجهاد الخاطر فيه قد جاءت ، ام من المراد المختزن ، الحاضر الوثوب في احشاء النفس." 176

* Examples of words lacking in emotional linkage with the reader are: " نصرانة جلب الستر " " ذبح الفراق " " الجميم " " بنخ جم " " المفيّح " and many others.

The remote hint at inspiration in poetry which seems to suggest itself in the sentence " وكأنما قذف بها قاذف من الغيب " is contradicted elsewhere by his declaration that he does not write from inspiration.[177] 'Abbūd calls him "a priest of art",[178] a coiner who might spend a year searching for a particular word and a poet who has a love bordering on obsession for some particular words "which he inserts forcibly where he pleases in the poem".[179] And in fact, the reader often finds himself able to move only slowly over the poem, taking the words in slowly,[180] and in their details. However, despite the particular quality of selectiveness in his words, he was unable to produce a new kind of poetry. The reader is hardly ever attracted by a sudden vision, or ever surprised by an unexpected revelation, or carried away to any remote horizons, or plunged into any considerable depths.[181] He is also seldom moved to any but a temporary ecstacy of a fleeting and superficial emotion. Control is the key word to his poetry, control and balance between emotion and ideas, and between form and content, which is a Classical attribute.

And surely this is what the poet himself believes.[182] As for the question of the old and the new in poetry, he insists that there is no particular merit in either, but that what decided the supremacy of the one or the other is its 'excellence'.[183] This is a correct assertion, but Nakhlah would have served the idea more had he told us what his definition of 'excellence' was. He was writing in 1966, when the furious battle between the old and the new in poetry, which had raged in the fifties and early sixties, had reached a stalemate from sheer exhaustion, but remained harbouring under the surface deep hostilities on both sides. Even before that, in 1962, he had asserted the same ideas, in verse this time:

ايقولون في البيان قديم وجديد ونفتدي في حواره [184]
ان ذاك القديم قيثاره العذب وهذا الجديد من اوتاره

Although the idea that the new poetry is only a string in the instrument of the old is acceptable if looked at from the right angle, it

can be quite misleading. For this general assumption cannot be applied with success to Nakhlah's own poetry, which rarely constitutes a new string but is rather an attempt to perfect and re-tune the old one.[185]

He has other correct concepts, which, nevertheless remain misleading for the same reason. "Poetry", he says, "revolves around the description of life and does not aim at a solution of its problems."[186] This, too, would have exposed the poet's own shortcomings had he attempted an elucidation of the statement from his own poetry, for his descriptions of life hardly penetrate deeper than the outer contours of physical beauty, hardly surpass the descriptive and decorative element,[187] and his poetry at its best hardly displays more than the simple, uncomplicated emotions stemming from superficial and sometimes affected experience. His own personality, that of the poet artisan, does not appear except at the level of his rhetorical capacity, and thus we do not see his inner depths but only his linguistic supremacy.[189] Moreover, he was often apt to pose and strike attitudes.

What in his opinion, then, constitutes his poetic technique? True to form, he makes his technical confessions well within the limits of his own experience. Poetry to him is made up of choice words with which the poem is artistically studded:

190 نسق الجواهر من اصابع ماهر لم يدر كيف تكلل اصبع جوهري
فاللفظ في سلك التناسق بهجة صف من اللمعان عرض الاسطر

It is framed by a sharpness of mind:

191 وبحدة في الذهن تبلغ حيث لا تصل الظنون

and a tenderness of feeling:

192 وبرقة في الحسن من خمش الحرير بها شؤون

Moreover, it is produced with great pain and labour:

193 زعم الشعر لكم الهيمة زاعم لم يدر ما طعم العنا
بين صدري وفمي لو نظروا مضض الوحي لردوا الاعينا
ان هذا الشعر في رونقه هو ما جاء به هذا الضنى

There is no criterion for poetry except taste:

194 ولعل رأى الذوق فيه مقدم فالذوق للشعراء ضربة لازب

However, it must have both rhyme and metre, for words alone are not capable of conveying what the poet has to say and must be helped by music and rhythm inherent in rhyme and metre.[195] For to him the function of a poem is primarily to give pleasure "tarab":

196 انا لو سئلت لقلت في تعريفه طرب يهزك كالغناء الصاخب

However, it can also give benefit to the reader because it perfects the soul and uplifts it.[197]

It is apparent therefore that Amīn Nakhlah's experiment was a ardent attempt to confirm the importance of the poetic language and expression within a Classical framework. He was building on al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's experiment which safe-guarded to a considerable degree the sanctimony of Classical purity without fossilizing it. There was a greater freedom, a greater spontaneity in al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's choice of diction, because it was invested with much more personal emotion. Although his poetry lacked tension (because tension comes from compression, from the sudden awakening of the depths, qualities lacking in his poetry) nevertheless, it was free enough to explore the limited realms of emotion open to him. The greater insistence of Nakhlah on balance and word sculpture gives his poetry a slow tempo which detracts from it the elements of surprise, wonder and ecstacy. He treats his love theme generally with an aloofness which allows no ardour, a great difference from al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's ardent tone.

Nakhlah's rise to fame took place in the late twenties and early thirties, when al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr had already established for himself a pan-Arab reputation. With business-like intuition he realised that his poetic field should not be limited to Lebanon but should stretch beyond the Lebanese borders into the other Arab countries. But, despite his many Arab affinities he never gained al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's position in the Arab world although, apparently, he was not lacking in active self-advertisement.[198]

Even Shauqi's testimony to him in verse, which he published at the opening of his first and second diwans did not raise him above his older compatriot. The recording of such verses reveals an arrogance[199] in both poets:

هذا ولي لعهدي وقسم الشعر بعدي 200
فكل من قال شعرا في الناس ، عبد لعبدي

Why has Amīn Nakhlah never attained al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's position? Firstly he was never able to match the emotional effect of al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's verse. Furthermore, he seems to have been less needed than him for the development of certain elements in modern poetry. It had been necessary for the development of modern Arabic poetry to have a major poet who could, while keeping to what was in the second and third decades still technically important in neo-Classicism (form, structure and phraseology), change or begin to change some of the other elements (theme, emotion, tone) and make of himself a link between the Classical and the Romantic trends in modern poetry; but there seemed to be no great necessity to repeat the experiment in a slightly later period. Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr with several of his contemporaries had been able to carry the responsibility of such an intermediary task, and to lay a kind of basis for future experiments and bolder adventures. On the other hand, Nakhlah's work, with its special qualities of restraint and balance, was able to lay a check on the onslaught of Romantic emotionalism in poetry. But it did not seem to supply the rising generation of poets in the thirties and forties with a particularly new experiment, which was what they needed. Arabic poetry in this period all over the Arab world was showing signs of great impatience with repetitive experiments. Numerous poets who entertained an avant-garde attitude tried to introduce innovations in themes, form, diction and the general trends of poetry. It does not matter in this respect that most of them failed. The important fact is that the spirit of experimentation, of anti-stagnation was there, preparing the ground for the more successful poetic experiments of the fifties and sixties.

The above analysis perhaps helps to explain why Nakhlah worked in isolation. The readers and the rising generation of poets might have enjoyed his carefully studded, well-balanced verses, but their enjoyment of them was limited and temporary. The real quest of the forties and fifties was for new experiments, new openings for the emotions, new depths and heights and a new factory for words, expressions and forms. The near Classical perfection of Nakhlah's poetry did not help his verse to become a part of the new medium of expression in a moving world, or to constitute a particularly valuable addition to our poetic heritage.[201]

This is enhanced by the fact that Nakhlah, as a Lebanese, was among a generation of poets well versed in the subtleties of the Arabic language, poets like Abū Shabakah, Sa'īd 'Aql, Ṣalāḥ Labaki and others. His linguistic superiority was not utilised, therefore, to keep a check on flaws of style and language in poetry around him as would have been the case had he been writing in Egypt in the twenties and thirties.

Nakhlah does not seem to have been recognised as a Classicist by all writers on him. Probably it was his new treatment of vocabulary which prompted Ṣaqr, for example, to say that he cannot be placed in any special school of poetry or within any special trend.[202] But a scrutiny of his poetry will immediately reveal not only his Classical links but also some decadent streaks. However, one must note here that Ṣaqr was writing in 1955, when Nakhlah's Daftar al-Ghazal was the only collection published for him, a collection which contains, no doubt, a selection of his best poems on love, wine, life and other such subjects. Nakhlah's two other collections, Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd (1962) and Layālī al-Raqmatain (1968) have a greater but less distinguished variety. The first, indeed, contains all the poems of Daftar al-Ghazal and other poems written on subjects relating to personal and social matters.[203] A perusal of this part of his collection in particular reveals the basic traditional nature of Nakhlah as well as some of his decadent streaks.

In the first place, the grouping as it occurs in the dīwan, of the poems strictly according to themes is a remarkably traditional quality. Most of his poems belong rather accurately to the group under which they are classed, a reminder of the descriptive nature of Nakhlah's poetry. For in the poetry of experience, although some classification according to theme is always possible, the complexity of human experience, when it is deep and profoundly felt, abhors such strict classification. Nakhlah's poems in Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd are grouped in ten groups: love and the beloved; life and nature; music and singing (which are poems of praise of famous singers in the Arab world, or elegies on them, etc.); caligraphy and painting (these are three poems: a poem in praise of a caligrapher, a poem in praise of a painter and a poem in description of a painting); poems on private matters (on his children and other members of his family with a eulogy on King Farouk of Egypt on his wedding); poems of friendship (which are poems of correspondence, (murāsalah), with some contemporary poets, all of them in praise of each other); short narratives; elegies on prominent men; poems on youth and its passing; and poems on poetry and poets.

Aside from the directly traditional themes such as the elegies and eulogies in which he, nevertheless, only seldom arrives at the absurdities and exaggerations of al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr,[204] Nakhlah's approach to most other subjects is generally traditional. His approach to nature emphasises his descriptive quality and his traditional links. His poem "Al-Shallāl" for example, contains perhaps some of his best descriptions of natural beauty:

يا عمود الجلال في الارض فرع ... منه باد والاصل في الجوزاء
يا لواه اللآلأ من كل لون ... نسجته اصابع اللاّلاء
يا اخا الغيث ، يا اخا النهر والبحر ... وقوس الغمام والانواء
انت حبل من فضة عقدوه ... بين هذا الوادي وهذا الفضاء

[205]

However, Nakhlah finishes the poem without effecting any true link with human experience.[206] Other such examples are his poems "Al-Shams fī Lubnān"

and "Al-Shitā'"[207] which is a description of winter, devoid like the two previous examples of any links with human experience. There is no communion and no merging with nature which exists there only as a picture that pleases the eye without exerting any spiritual effect on the poet. This is why it was possible for Nakhlah to write descriptive poems about lifeless objects such as a comb[208] which is pretentiously entered in a forced relationship with the damsel who uses it. The patience in the description, the magnificent power of detail is completely misused and wasted. The poem tells us nothing and aspires at nothing. The vision of beauty it delineates is limited and almost lifeless.

But a truly decadent streak appears when Nakhlah resorts to other poetic activities. His murāsalāt with other contemporary poets are an insistence on an obsolete nineteenth century form of poetic activity. They are also an insistence on a self-centered attitude to life in which the poet, his friends and the joy they experience in exchanging compliments and praise seem to dominate life. His dabbling in this accounts for the incapacity of this most capable poet to reflect a true life experience or to feel the many forces that underlie life around him: the noble aspirations, the hopes, and the strife on the one hand, and the tragic elements on the other: the sordidness, the treachery, the suffering, and the failure which attack Arab life and hinder its progressive course. Thus the worst thing that could be said about his poetry, indeed the worst thing that could be said about any poetry, is that it does not give a true picture of life around it. Arab life in the mid-century with its underlying forces, fears and ambitions, is not represented at all in his verse. On the contrary, Nakhlah's poetry gives a distorted image of this life because the picture it delineates is one of placidity, prosperity, leisure and an intent on a sort of aristocratic pleasure and enjoyment which is alien to its tumultous existence. His poetry depicts him, the poet, as a dilettante, a sort of a Medici patron of arts living in an age of prosperity and tranquil creativity, and it is

some of the poems in which he treats subjects of art which show the worst of the decadent streaks in his poetry. His poem "Ḥāmid" in praise of the Turkish caligrapher who was his teacher, and his art is a flagrant example of this:

209

بأحلى خطوط الوشي ما خط حامد ... وتفديه ام للربيع ، ووالد
احاول بالتشبيه وصف سطوره ... وان اعجز التشبيه ما انا ناشد
فكالجيش ،هذا صفه غير ملتو ، ... وكالغيد ،هذا سربه المتوارد
. . . . . .
احامد تلك الضاد ،هل كحروفها ... حلا لعيون اشمد ومراود ؟
فسل قومك الترك الذين تغيروا ... عن الضاد ،هل قد ابرك الفقد فاقد ؟
. . . . . .
اذا الفات الضاد لاحت قدودها ... بدا في قدود الغيد قال وحاسد
وفي نقط الثاءآت غمز محبب ... وفي العين غنج فهي غيداء ،ناهد
ولله كم في السين روح لمقلة ... لها من تعاريج هناك وسائد

However, it would be unfair to this unique if isolated poet[210] to neglect mentioning his best poems. These are mostly found in his first collection and some of them, like his poem "Al-Shafah"[211] attained great fame in the forties and fifties. His poem "Al-Ḥabīb al-Awwal"[212] is a beautiful description of love and one of Nakhlah's most intoxicating poems:

213

احبك في القنوط وفي التمني ... كأني منك صرت وصرت مني
احبك فوق ما وسعت ضلوعي ... وفوق مدى يدى وبلوغ ظني
هوى مترنح الاعطاف طلق ... على سهل الشباب المطمئن

This is absolutely beautiful and attains real spiritual heights in those lines:

214

نعيم حبنا فانظر بعيني ... وعرس للمنى فاسمع باذني
كأن الصحو يلمع في ظنوني ... ويخفق في ضلوعي الف غصن

Other poems have delved deeper into the realms of passion like his poem "Al-Shafah", above mentioned, and his poem "al-Qaṣīdah al-Saudā'"[215] which is a reminder of Badawi al-Jabal's poem on the prostitute described above, although it does not possess its ecstacy and ardour:

216 طولي ليلتي على المرمر الرخص وفي اللمح من سواد الزبرجد
وانزلي الابنوس في موسم العود على مترع المناعم ارغد
مهرجان لنا ونهزة سعد تحت ستر الدجى وزاد مزوّد ...

217

Perhaps his best poem, however, is "Bi'r al-Sāmirriyyah" which is the most directly symbolic poem in the collection. In this poem an elevation of his beloved to the level of sister of Christ is not only acceptable, but beautiful, emphasising the double meaning of the poem:

218 فتضاحكت اخت المسيح واعرضت عني بجرتها كأني اكذب

What can the modern poet learn from Nakhlah's experiment? There is no doubt that several points of strength and interest can be utilized in his poetry; but a large part of it has to be dismissed first. However, even with this rejection the reader will find himself with a handful of poems certainly among the most exquisite in modern Arabic. The first lesson he will learn is reverence for the poetic word. It is a reverence he has also felt in the poetry of poets such as Badawi al-Jabal and al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr, but in Nakhlah it is coupled with greater control and deliberation, so much so that the reader can feel the poet's striving towards perfection and exquisite polish; and in an age of greater leniency and a greater insistence on meaning and content than on diction and Classical correctness, Nakhlah's artistic restraint and meticulous care should be an example beneficial in the extreme.

Another quality dominant in his poetry is emotional restraint. Although this can be an impoverishing element at times, as it has been shown, it has saved some of his best poems from the traditional sentimentality inherent in their themes, themes such as crying over lost youth (see his lovely poem "Al-Rafīq al-Dā'i"[219]) and his elegy on his father.[220] This quality was greatly needed in the forties, when probably most of these poems were written, for Romanticism had reached its most sentimental stage at that time.

A third quality which the contemporary poet can benefit from to a

great extent is grace. Neo-Realist critics might describe Nakhlah's poetry as aristocratic and snobbish, but a more objective outlook will reveal the basic good taste and the pleasant ingenuity of the poet. The felicity of his expressions, the grace of his style, the lucidity of his meanings do stand in stark contrast to some poetic experiments that are carried out even at the present time.[221] A tendency in the fifties which has persisted up to the present time was to crowd the poem with as many words denoting violence and horror as possible. Such a quality did not appear with minor poets only but with such leading poets as Khalīl Ḥāwi for example. On the other hand, poets with a deliberate intent on extreme ambiguity can also learn that even a style as difficult as Nakhlah's can be remarkably lucid, and might be able to benefit a great deal from a close study of Nakhlah's technique. Among these poets one can list also another leading figure, Adūnīs, who, in his essay on him[222] did not seem to find in his experiment any points of interest at all. It does not seem particularly strange that Amin Nakhlah himself cannot understand the poetic experiment of the modern poets and finds it a 'renegade' from the Arab culture and language. He writes:

[223]

" ان جل هذا الشعر ،وحقك ،لا افهمه ،وكيف تريدين ان يـــكون المرء في باب الادب ما لا يفهم ؟ فعسى ان يكتب" للشعر الحديث" في الايام وجود اقلام ..... تقربه من الافهام ،ومن الاذواق العربية ، والبلاغات العربية والاوضاع العربيـــة " .

Footnotes

1. S. Labaki, Lubnān al-Shā'ir, p.57.

2. Ibid., p.56; 'Abbūd, Ruwwād, p.54.

3. 'Abbūd, Ruwwād, p.179.

4. See Amīn Nakhlah, Al-Harakah al-Lughawiyyah fī Lubnān fi 'l-Ṣadr al-Awwal min al-Qarn al-'Ishrīn, 2nd edition, Beirut, 1958. For examples see Ibrāhīm al-Yāziji, Naj'at al-Rā'id wa Shar'at al-Wārid, a book on lexicology published in Beirut in 1904; Sa'īd al-Shartūni's Najdat al-Yara', another book on lexicology also published in Beirut in 1905 and his Aqrab al-Mawārid, a dictionary; see also the work of Henri Lemmens, the Jesuit Orientalist who lived in Lebanon, entitled Farā'id al-Lughah, published in 1889 at Beirut also on lexicology (another Jesuit Father had edited Fiqh al-Lughah by al-Tha'ālibi ('Abd al-Malik Abū Manṣūr) and published it at Beirut in 1885). Many books on grammar were written, too (see Nakhlah, ibid., pp.24-29) most famous among them is Rashīd al-Shartūni's Mabādi' al-'Arabiyyah, published in 1906. Books on the science of language (see Nakhlah, ibid., pp.30-34) perhaps the most important of which is Jurjī Zaidān's Tarīkh al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah published in 1904. Another great contribution by the Lebanese was the effort of many writers and linguists in forging new words to express new meanings (see Nakhlah ibid., pp.38-43). Many of these newly forged words were incorporated into the language and are in use in our own days.
The examples given above are only but a few among many such examples.

5. Nakhlah, op.cit., p.15.

6. See 'Abbūd, Judud wa Qudamā', pp.274-5, for a short account of the feuds and linguistic criticism in Lebanon at the beginning of this century.

7. See above p. 60 . The verses by al-Sheikh Ṣālih al-Tamīmi in which he refers to a certain weakness in the style of Christians:

عهدناك تعفو عن مسيء تعذرا — الا فاعفنا من رد شعر تنصرا
وهل من مسيحي فصيح تعده — اذا اينع الشعر الفصيح واثمرا

had a retort from Buṭrus Karāmah, the Lebanese court poet whose poem "Al-Khāliyyah" had brought about this controversy:

لعمرك ما داء الفصاحة ملة — ولا نسب حتى الام واهجرا
. . . . . .
فقس مسيحي المسموأل موسوى — وغيرهم ممن تقدم اعصرا

See al-Ma'ārif magazine, June and July, 1963, p.44.

8. See A. Karam, "Madkhal", p.256; 'Abbūd, Judud, p.278; Labaki, op.cit., p.77.

9. Ibid., pp.81-2.

10. On this diwan see 'Abbūd, Dimaqs wa Urjuwān, pp.163-6.

11. See 'Abbūd, Naqadāt 'Ābir, Beirut, 1959, pp.35-6.

12. See two articles on him by 'Abbūd in Mujaddidūn wa Mujtarrūn, pp.116-20 and in Dimaqs, pp.36-8.

13. See Labaki, op.cit., pp.70-3.

14. On him see 'Abbūd, Judud, pp.273-81; Dimaqs, pp.26-7; Mujaddidūn, pp.71, 72 and 118-9.

15. Sāmi al-Dahhān, Al-Amīr Shakīb Arslān, Cairo, 1960, p.65.

16. Ibid., quoting Arslān himself, p.66; see also Karam, "Madkhal" p.253, n. when he speaks of its modern carriculum; Ahmad al-Sharabāṣi, Amīr al-Bayān Shakīb Arslān, Cairo, 1963, Vol.I, 77; see also Fu'ād Kan'ān, "Ṣalāḥ Labaki Shā'iran", in Lubnān al-Shā'ir, pp.1-2.

17. Dahhān, Arslān, p.66 and n.

18. See al-Bustāni's dictionary, Al-Bustān; see also his Munāẓarah Lughawiyyah baina al-Asātidhah 'Abdullah al-Bustāni, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Mughrabi and Anistās al-Karmili , Cairo, 1355 A.H.

19. Dahhān, Arslān, pp.66-7 and 66 n, and 106; 'Abbūd, Ruwwād, pp.179-81; Karam, op.cit., pp.255-6; on the amiable relations between al-Bustāni and Arslān and the influence of the former on the latter see al-Sharbāṣi, op.cit., I, 81.

20. Karam, op.cit., p.256.

21. Dahhān, Arslān, p.65.

22. Ibid., pp.66 and 67.

23. Ibid., p.67.

24. Ibid., pp.67-8.

25. Ibid., p.69; al-Sharbāṣi, op.cit., p.82.

26. For a study of his works see Dahhān, Arslān, pp.209-65; Al-Sharabāṣi, op.cit., Vol.II, for quotations from his prose and poetry, a history of his works and some comments and reviews on them.

27. See Ibid., I, p.320.

28. Ibid., pp.232-9; Dahhān, Arslān, p.86.

29. Ibid., p.85.

30. 'Abbūd, Ruwwād , p.113. He also says that if Arslān were not involved in the writing of prose he would have been the prince of poets, and not Shauqi, p.114.

31. Al-Sharabāsi, op.cit., p.320. This might be true. Arslān never wrote any poetry on his Circassian wife whom he loved. See ibid., p.126;. When a dear servant of his died a tragic death, he was bereaved, but wrote about her life and death only in prose, ibid., pp.127-8.

32. As quoted by 'Abbūd, Ruwwād, pp.113-114.

33. Ibid., p.114.

34. See his diwān, Al-Hawā wa 'l-Shabāb, n.p., 1953, pp.9-11 for an account on why he called himself 'Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr' during the first World War when Lebanon was under Ottoman rule, to elude coercion as a result of his national poems.

35. Karam, op.cit., p.255 mentions this date. However I. Sābā, Shu'arā' al-Qissah wa 'l-Wasf fī Lubnān, p.39 says it was 1890 and so do Luc Norin and Edouard Tarabay in Anthologie de la Litterature Arabe contemporaine, Paris, 1967, p.46.

36. Labaki, op.cit., p.78.

37. Karam, op.cit., p.255; see also al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr's panygeric on al-Ḥikmah school entitled "Wukr al-Nusūr" in Shi'r al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr, Beirut, 1961, pp.38-9.

38. Op.cit., p.84.

39. Ibid., p.82. In Al-Hawā the first stanza of the poem is omitted. He gives the year 1912 as the date of the poem, p.35.

40. Shi'r, pp.137-8.

41. Ibid., p.138.

42. Op.cit., pp.257-8.

43. Ibid., pp.256-7.

44. Al-Hawā, pp.47-8; Shi'r, pp.199-201.

45. Ibid., pp.175-86; Al-Hawā, pp.77-89.

46. Ibid., pp.67-74; Shi'r, pp.269-78.

47. Ibid., pp.234-41; Al-Hawā, pp.103-9.

48. Examples are "Mādhā Aqūlu lahū," 1914, Al-Hawā, p.44; Shi'r, p.113; "Ana law Kuntu yā Sulaimā", Al-Hawā, p.55; Shi'r, p.310; "Qalbun Khāfiq", 1916, Al-Hawā, pp.64-66; Shi'r under the title of "Ana Sāhir" pp.95-97; "Ilā Imra'ah", 1918, Al-Hawā, pp.75-6; Shi'r, pp.72-3, etc.

49. See J.A. Bellamy, E.N. McCarus and A. Yacoub, Contemporary Arabic Readers, V, Modern Arabic Poetry, Part 2, Ann Arbor, 1966, p.59; 'Ādil al-Ghaḍbān, the introduction to al-Hawā, p.28.

50. Al-Hawā, pp.157-8.

51. Op.cit., p.260.

52. Karam, op.cit., p.258 n.

53. Labaki, op.cit., p.84.

54. This date is given by Norin and Tarabay, loc.cit; and by I. Sābā, op.cit., p.39.

55. Ilyās Abū Shabakah, Al-Muqtaṭaf magazine, 1st February, 1939, Vol. 94., 222.

56. Karam, op.cit., p.257.

57. Ibid., p.258.

58. Abū Shabakah, op.cit., p.223; Sābā, loc.cit., gives the date as 1930.

59. Karam, loc.cit.

60. Al-Hawā, pp.135-40; Shi'r, pp.130-6.

61. See Iḥsān 'Abbās, "Daur al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āṣir", Al-Ādāb magazine, June, 1961, p.9, on this matter. He regards it as one of al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr's conservative qualities. However, it was a sort of liberation from the immediate poetic tradition with which poets of his own generation were caught. 'Abbūd also insists that his love poetry was in the conservative tradition. See 'Ala 'l-Mihakk, p.84; see also Yūsuf al-Khāl, Shi'r quarterly, No.22, Spring 1962, pp.109-10.

62. Shi'r, p.60.

63. Ibid., p.168; Al-Hawā, p.37.

64. See 'Abbās, loc.cit.

65. Shi'r, p.59.

66. Ibid., p.67.

67. See 'Abbās, op.cit., p.10.

68. Shi'r, p.53.

69. Ibid., pp.232-3; see also his poem "Kaifa Ansā?" ibid., pp.69-71, Al-Hawā, pp.50-2; and his sad, impressive little poem "Yā Nafsi!", Shi'r, p.118.

70. Al-Hawā, p.33; Shi'r, p.142.

71. Ibid., p.54.

72. Ibid., p.25; Al-Hawā, p.154-5.

73. See for example the folk poetry of Ilyās Badawi, a Lebanese folk poet as quoted by Anīs Frayha in his book Hadārah fī Tarīq al-Zawāl, the American University, Beirut, 1957, pp.279-280 and p.283. Ilyās Badawi flourished in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, ibid., p.277. See also Dīwān Rashīd Nakhlah, Beirut, 1964, for many examples.

74. Karam, op.cit., p.256; Anwar al-Ma'addāwi, Kalimāt fī 'l-Adab, Sidon-Beirut, 1966, p.65; Labaki, op.cit., pp.82 and 84; 'Abbās, op.cit., pp.9 and 10.

75. For more on this see 'Abbās, op.cit., p.62. However, Karam op.cit., p.259, insists that he represents in his poetry "the end of an era, not the beginning of a new kind /of poetry/".

76. Ibid., p.260; Labaki, op.cit., pp.88 and 89; Maurice Ṣaqr, "Wathbat al-Shi'r al-Lubnāni", Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.66.

77. Labaki, op.cit., p.89.

78. For minor mistakes of his language he was criticised by 'Abbūd, Mujaddidūn, pp.57, 59 and 60; 'Ala 'l-Mihakk, pp.73, 144 et passim.

79. Al-Ma'addāwi, op.cit., p.65.

80. Ṣaqr, op.cit., p.65; Norin and Tarabay, loc.cit.

81. Karam, loc.cit.

82. Norin and Tarabay, loc.cit.

83. Al-Ma'addāwi, loc.cit.

84. See Sa'īd 'Aql, the introduction to his diwan Shi'r, p.13.

85. Saqr, op.cit., p.66; Labaki, op.cit., pp.84 and 89.

86. Yūsuf al-Khāl, loc.cit.

87. Shi'r, p.24.

88. Shi'r, p.28.

89. Ibid., p.37.

90. Ibid., p.166.

91. Ibid., p.81.

92. Karam, op.cit., p.257.

93. Shi'r, p.81.

94. Al-Maqdisi, Al-Ittijāhāt al-Adabiyyah fi 'l-'Ālam al-'Arabi 'l-Hadīth p.440.

95. Dīwān Rashīd Nakhlah, p.19.

96. Ibid., p.25.

97. Ibid., p.27.

98. Mujaddidūn ..., p.93.

99. Op.cit., p.66.

100. Ibid.

101. Dūlāb, Beirut, 1957, p.84.

102. It is not easy to determine the beginning of this tradition in folk poetry. Rashīd Nakhlah's poetry shows that it must have been alive for quite some time, for it is elaborate and seems to have already many stock similes and expressions. 'Abbūd traces the origins of the Lebanese zajal to about five centuries ago. See his interesting book, Al-Shi'r al-'Ammi 'l-Lubnāni, Beirut, posthumously in 1968, p.78; see also pp.78-86 for an account of the first Lebanese folk poet, Bishop Gibrā'īl bin al-Qilā'i al-Luhfudi and examples of his zajals. See also ibid., p.92 for an early verse in the same tradition; see also many examples of verses in this tradition written in more recent times, p.129 et passim.

103. See his poems on al-Mutanabbi, Shi'r, pp.104-110, Al-Hawā, pp.186-93; on al-Firdawsi, Shi'r, pp.61-6; on Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arri, ibid., pp.140-1; etc.

104. On Arab national themes see Shi'r, pp.13-4; 30; 49-50; 52-5; 124-5; 139; 162-4; 281; on his own country see ibid.,pp.14; 16; 17-8; 21; 22; 36; 47; 78-9; 86; 87-8; 156; 166-7; 205-6; 264-5.

105. Ihsān 'Abbās, however, describes the social and political trend in al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr's poetry as "the key to the authentic streak in his poetry, because he had grown up to feel the suffering of the community and /to believe/ in the ideal of Arab /nationalism/ and ... love of country" (Al-Ādāb, June, 1961, p.9). He regrets the fact, however, that the poet only wrote such poems on occasions which were decided by events (ibid., p.63). But this very fact might have suggested to 'Abbās, who is one of the foremost critics of poetry in the fifties, that the authenticity of these poems could be in question if one remembered the whole concept of poetry during the early decades of this century and the automatic belief that the poet was the public spokesman of his own society. Al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr, because of these relations with these concepts was tied to the platform and therefore to all kinds of platform poetry which did not refrain from public eulogies and elegies. The very spontaniety of the poetic art is questioned here. In fact, al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr got himself a bad reputation when he wrote his eulogy on King 'Abd al-'Azīz Āl Sa'ūd (published in Al-Adīb magazine, May 1953, p.73); and his nickname "the grave digger", given to him by disapproving critics because of his tendency to stick to old methods, forms and ideas, seems to persist, for it was mentioned in the Contemporary Arabic Reader, V, by Bellamy, McCarus and Yacoub, p.59. See also his eulogy on Prince 'Abdullah al-Faiṣal, Al-Hawā, pp.31-2. See also 'Abbūd, 'Ala 'l-Mihakk, pp.195-7 for a severe criticism of a eulogy he wrote on the occasion of the marriage of King Fārūk I of Egypt.

106. Shi'r, p.136.

107. See ibid., pp.12-3 for what Sa'īd 'Aql says on this; see also 'Abbās, Op.cit., p.62.

108. Shi'r, p.81.

109. A village in the mountains of Lebanon, al-Matn county.

110. See Al-Hawā, pp.125-7. However, in Shi'r he split the poem into two, one part relating to his description of nature, pp.165-7 and the other relating to the man eulogised, p.189.

111. Pp.154-8.

112. The first poem, entitled "Adab al-Sharāb" appears on pp.24-5, and deals with his love of wine and of living; the second, a small extract entitled "Riyāḥ Safīnati" is about Lebanon, p.126; and the third, entitled "Al-Shāmu Manbituhum", pp.215-216 is about Damascus and the Damascene.

113. Yūsuf al-Khāl adamantly rejects it; see Shi'r quarterly, No.22, Spring 1962, pp.110-1.

114. I. 'Abbās op.cit., p.62 writes in defence of al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr's technique and finds in the lack of unity of some of his poems a form of escape from a theme he does not like to one which he prefers. However, despite 'Abbās's defence of his theory one remains inclined to believe that the poet adopted, probably unconsciously, the Classical method.

115. Norin and Tarabay, loc.cit. See also his little poem at the celebration, Al-Adīb magazine, July 1961, p.54.

116. See 'Abbūd, 'Ala 'l- Mihakk, p.84, where he says that "the poet excels only in love poetry ... especially if it is unrequited".

117. See ibid., pp.69-74 and 143. See also Mujaddidūn, p.53-70.

118. Ibid; 'Ala 'l-Mihakk, loc.cit., also pp.131, 136-7, et passim. The poet, however, omitted in Shi'r some of the poems of occasion or some verses in those he published, especially some of those sternly criticised by 'Abbūd. Compare for example pp.69-74 in 'Ala 'l-Mihakk with the same poem in Shi'r, pp.248-252.

119. Al-Ma'addāwi, op.cit., p.65.

120. Al-Muqtaṭaf magazine, 1st February, 1939, Vol.94, ii, 224.

121. Mujaddidūn ,pp.54 and 68. See 'Ala 'l-Mihakk where 'Abbūd criticised several of his poems of occasion; pp.91-3, et passim.

122. Examples are his poem "Min Ma'āsi 'l-Harb", Al-Hawā, pp.77-89. It appeared in Shi'r under the title of "Rabbi Qul Lil-Jū'", pp.175-186; also his poem "al-Riyāl al-Muzayyaf" published only in Al-Hawā, pp.59-63.

123. Examples are his poem "Qaṣr Yeldiz", in Shi'r, p.34 having been written in 1913; his poem "Al-Fuqarā'", ibid., pp.76-7; his poem "al-Dustūr", ibid., p.211; and "Al-Jābi", ibid., pp.253-6 and in Al-Hawā , pp.180-3.

124. 'Aql, op.cit., p.14.

125. Labaki, op.cit., p.87.

126. Ibid., Karam, op.cit., p.257; Ma'addāwi, op.cit., p.65; Bellamy, McCarus and Yacoub, loc.cit.

127. Op.cit., p.12; Norin and Tarabay, loc.cit.

128. Yūsuf al-Khal, Shi'r quarterly, No.22, Spring 1962, p.109.

129. See Labaki, op.cit., p.84.

130. See Al-Khāl, loc.cit., for a very good description of the Arab psyche between the two World Wars.

131. Al-Ma'addāwi, loc.cit.

132. Al-Hawā, p.129; Shi'r, p.291.

133. See Yūsuf al-Khāl, op.cit., p.110.

134. On his popularity see Norin and Tarabay, loc.cit., Bellamy, MeCarus and Yacoub, loc.cit., references particularly interesting in this context because they are results of recent research.

135. Shi'r, p.177.

136. Ibid., p.117; see also p.172.

137. Labaki, op.cit., p.82.

138. See also Ma'addāwi, op.cit., p.68; 'Abbās, op.cit., p.10.

139. See examples in Shi'r, pp.42-3, et passim.

140. See also Labaki, ibid., p.84.

141. Shi'r, , p.42.

142. Dīwān Rashīd Nakhlah, p.23.

143. Shi'r, p.152.

144. Dīwān Rashīd Nakhlah, p.19.

145. Ibid.

146. Ibid.

147. Ibid.

148. Ibid.

149. Op.cit., p.259.

150. Ibid.

151. See Dīwān Rashīd Nakhlah for numerous examples; see especially pp.32-60; compare for example Nakhlah's poem on al-Bārūk river pp.41-3 with al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr's poems "Zāhiratu 'l-Rubā", Shi'r, pp.165-7, "Difāf Baradā", ibid., pp.52-5 and others, with their dependence on sweet memories. A rapport between the two poets must have taken place all the time; see Dīwān Rashīd Nakhlah, pp.154-5 where he has re-written in zajal al-Ṣaghir's famous poem "Hind wa Ummuhā".

152. See Yūsuf al-Khāl, op.cit., p.109.

153. Shi'r, p.148.

154. Ibid., p.133.

155. Ibid., p.223.

156. Ibid., p.281.

157. Ibid., p.163.

158. Ibid., p.126.

159. See 'Abbās, op.cit., pp.10 and 62.

160. For scattered examples see Shi'r, pp.44, 67, 281, et passim.

161. Loc.cit.

162. Shi'r, p.164.

163. See his poem "Hind wa Ummuhā", ibid., pp.199-201.

164. Ibid., p.167.

165. Ibid., p.248; see ʿAbbūd, ʿAla ʾl-Mihakk, p.69, for a criticism of this verse.

166. Shiʿr, p.288.

167. Ibid., p.163.

168. Labaki, op.cit., p.91.

169. Al-Khāl, loc.cit.

170. ʿAbbās, op.cit., p.9.

171. All the above biographical information comes from a letter by Amīn Nakhlah to the present writer dated June 5th 1968.

172. Al-Ādāb magazine, January 1955, p.71.

173. Loc.cit.

174. Ibid.

175. Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, New York, 1965, p.393.

176. Layāli ʾl-Raqmatain, Beirut, 1966, pp.18-9.

177. Daftar al-Ghazal, Beirut-Sidon, 1952, p.135.

178. Judud, p.309.

179. Ibid.

180. Ibid., p.310 where he states that Nakhlahgoes on as slow as a tortoise.

181. See Adūnīs, "Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd", Shiʿr quarterly, Spring 1962, p.113.

182. Layāli ʾl-Raqmatain, p.16.

183. Ibid., p.17.

184. Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, Beirut, 1962, p.300.

185. See Adūnīs, op.cit., pp.113 and 114.

186. Layāli ʾl-Raqmatain, p.20.

187. Adūnīs, op.cit., p.112.

188. See for example his elegy "Fī Manāḥat al-Ḥabīb", Layāli ʾl-Raqmatain, pp.116-8, on his dead beloved, where the extreme control of emotion is completely unsuited to the theme.

189. Adūnīs, op.cit., p.113.

190. Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, p.204.

191. Ibid., p.170.

192. Ibid.

193. Ibid., p.307.

194. Ibid., p.322.

195. Layāli ʾl-Raqmatain, p.17.

196. Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, p.321.

197. Layāli ʾl-Raqmatain, p.21.

198. See ʿAbbūd, Judud, p.306.

199. See ʿAbbūd, ibid., pp.307-8.

200. See the first page of Daftar al-Ghazal and p.13 of Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd.

201. Adūnīs, op.cit., pp.114 and 117, rather unfairly denies him all credit.

202. Al-Ādāb magazine, January, 1955, p.71.

203. See the introduction of Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, p.11.

204. ʿAbbūd draws an elaborate comparison between Nakhlah's elegy on Shauqi and that of al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr, showing Nakhlah's superiority in the field and his rejection of hyperbole and absurdities. However, Nakhlah's poetry is not free from those either, as the present discussion of his poetry will reveal.

205. Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, p.92.

206. Layāli 'l-Raqmatain, pp.66-9.

207. Ibid., pp.61-5.

208. Ibid., pp.36-8.

209. Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, pp.121-2.

210. Norin and Tarabay, loc.cit.

211. Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, pp.33-4; (first appeared in Daftar al-Ghazal, pp.25-6).

212. Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, pp.27-8; (first appeared in Daftar al-Ghazal, pp.19-20).

213. Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, p.27.

214. Ibid., p.28.

215. Ibid., pp.37-9; (first appeared in Daftar al-Ghazal, pp.23-4).

216. Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, pp.38-9.

217. Ibid., pp.183-6; (first appeared in Daftar al-Ghazal, pp.27-30).

218. Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, p.185.

219. Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, p.64; also in Daftar al-Ghazal, p.62.

220. Ibid., pp.77-9; Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, pp.133-5.

221. See for example his lovely little poem "Ism al-Ḥabīb", Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, p.41; Daftar al-Ghazal, p.58; and his gracious poem to his beloved, grown old, ibid., pp.42-3; Al-Dīwān al-Jadīd, pp.287-8.

222. Op.cit.

223. Extract from his letter to the present writer dated June 5th 1968.

SECTION 5: TRANS-JORDAN AND PALESTINE

It is usual to think of poetry in Trans-Jordan before 1948 as an extension of poetry in Palestine. This must be due to both geographical and cultural links. The geographical proximity of the two countries and their relative remoteness from centres of government and culture in Ottoman days gave them an affinity of a kind. They were made up of four administrative districts which suffered from the same bad conditions, namely: bad organisation, neglect by the government, the lack of secondary and high education until the end of the nineteenth century, and weak links between them and the outside world.[1] When Emir ʿAbdullah, the son of Hashimite King Ḥusain, became official ruler of Trans-Jordan, he transferred his capital in the early twenties from the old town of Salṭ to Amman, then a small town set amidst several mountains. The new capital attracted two kinds of emigrants: merchants and office seekers. The first group came mostly from Damascus; the second group came mostly from Palestine. Thus the organisation and direction of government affairs on the one hand and the flow of economic life on the other were mostly indebted to Arabs coming to the small country from other Arab towns. This fact became a cause of resentment for Trans-Jordan's foremost poet, Muṣṭafa Wahbi al-Tal who flourished in this period. Yet this very fact created in Trans-Jordan, which was a small artificially-created country populated mostly by Bedouin tribes and a poor peasantry, a homogeneous atmosphere in which urban influences made themselves felt on a rough, predominantly Bedouin culture. It also brought its cultural atmosphere nearer to that of Palestine during the twenties, thirties and forties, the time when Palestine was quickly developing in many spheres. The annexation after 1948 of that part of Palestine remaining in Arab hands by Trans-Jordan's King ʿAbdullah finally brought the two countries together, making of them a small kingdom with many problems and a troubled and beleaguered population.

Despite this 'apparent' similarity of cultural atmosphere, however, the cultural links in the two regions during the first decades of this century were not really the same. For the strong Bedouin influences which prevailed in Trans-Jordan were lacking in the main cultural centres of Palestine. Neither the Damascene merchants nor the Palestinian government officials seem to have had, in those early decades, many literary interests. Moreover, the substantial Circassian minority living mostly in the capital or around it, did not participate in the country's cultural life or contribute to it at that time. It seems that the literary expression in the twenties and thirties remained only in the hands of the region's indigenous population: the Bedouins who had their own poetry,[2] and the semi-urbanised population living mainly in the small towns, who all came under persistent Bedouin influences. This strong Bedouin poetic heritage in Jordan may have influenced its one major poet, al-Tal, and given him the freedom and originality which was needed at the time, as well as the candour and spontaniety which his poetry enjoyed. Palestine's urban population which was quickly becoming one of the most sophisticated and serious-minded in the Middle East,[3] was not very artistically inclined during these decades. For despite a great advance in education and a love of learning, few poets flourished in Palestine itself without first having travelled and made contact with poetic traditions and poetic talents outside their country.[4]

1. TRANS-JORDAN

(i) The Forces of Change: Muṣṭafa Wahbi al-Tal

Trans-Jordan's foremost poet of the period,[5] Muṣṭafa Wahbi al-Tal (1897-1949) has more good qualities and weaknesses than most poets of his generation who enjoyed similar prominence. His countrymen still love his emotional, simple verses and the spirit of candid bravado which permeates his poetry. Born in Irbid in North Jordan, the son of a teacher who also practised law,[6] he had to go out of his small country for his secondary

education.[7] His education seems to have been somewhat desultory, for we see him change schools three times, going first to Damascus, then to Beirut and finally to Aleppo where he graduated in 1918 from an Ottoman-directed school.[8] In the same year he began work as a teacher in Eskishehr,[9] a post which he kept only for one year and then returned to Irbid.[10] Just as his school life showed a pattern of changeability, his working life showed the same pattern throughout its relatively moderate span, mainly due to political reasons. His biographers recount a constant change of jobs, many resignations and dismissals, as well as several periods of imprisonment and exile.[11] They also mention two periods of his life when he worked at his profession, law, which he had studied in 1930.[12] The first period, a seemingly prosperous one,[13] was between 1930-1,[14] and the second period lasted from 1942 to the end of his life.[15] This, however, seems to have been a period of frustration, professional failure, despair, constant drinking, illness and finally death.[16] In its last years, it was also a period of poetic sterility.[17]

This outline of al-Tal's life, despite its brevity, suffices to show him as a non-conformist and perhaps even a misfit. He loved wine, women and song, but this was not what signalled him out, for there were many young men who followed a hedonistic trend in life. This trend, moreover, is not necessarily progressive and can be assumed by a reactionary or even a brute. But al-Tal's love of life was not merely a love of its merrier and less responsible side, but was also a deep reverence for the basic values of freedom and human dignity.

Al-Tal or ʿArār, as he called himself,[18] may be regarded as the first Bohemian of modern Arabic poetry, a quality which might have been great had his poetry been of a higher calibre. Perhaps he is also the first real outsider among the modern Arab poets to reject the whole framework of Arab life as he saw and knew it; another important quality. And although al-Tal

kept (as may well be expected) to the Classical form,* he was often able to free himself from the hold of the Classical stock phrases and ways of expression and to use his own language and methods of expression. This is yet another outstanding quality. His introduction into poetry of the language of daily conversation and of a contemporary diction is truly remarkable. These qualities of individuality and courage, of spontaneity and authenticity, however, have been levelled down, to a considerable degree, by a lack of artistic polish, and a certain neglect of perfecting his work.

His only diwan, 'Ashiyyāt Wādī 'l-Yābis , was published posthumously; the poems were collected by the poet's son from newspapers, notes and drafts left by the poet.[19] Muḥmūd al-Muṭlaq, the poet's friend who edited the collection and wrote the introduction, admits in the preface that he had to omit publishing some poems and certain lines in others because they "were very bad and fell below the level of his poetry".[20] He adds that he believes that the poet did not put any effort in writing them.[21] As for the linguistic and grammatical mistakes in the diwan, which are many, he says that he has left them as they are.[22] Al-Tal is described as having had a good knowledge of language and grammar, a fact which makes his mistakes difficult to account for except as being due to nonchalance and impatience. There is no need for him, for example, to use the word "'awaz" (عـوز) in the following verse:

ورعيـت حرمة شاعر دنـــــــف يشكو اليك العوْز والفقـــــــــرا 23

and have it read as "'awz" for the sake of the metre. The word "ḍīq" (ضيـــــق) or any number of similar words would have been appropriate. This is more enhanced by the fact that "'awaz" and "faqr" (عوز وفقـــــر) are nearly identical.

Another example of linguistic mistakes is his use of the word "madyūnī" (مديونـــــــي) in the following instead of " مدينـــــــي ":

* The presence of poems written in free verse in his diwan will be discussed later and an attempt at denying their authenticity will be made.

24 فذا يقول غريمي كيف تمهلـــــــــه وذاك يصرخ لم تحبسه مديونـــي

His use of banal words is sometimes grotesque. The following verse furnishes a good example:

25 يا هبر لا بشرى ولا حـــــــــواره يطربها عزفك بالقيثـــــــارة
يا هبر حسب الامـــة الحمـــــــارة حكومة براجـــة بصـــــارة
(فـلا ن) فيها لولب الـوزارة .

His grammatical mistakes are even more numerous. There is no excuse at all for him to put in the nominative words joined to a word in the accusative because the rhyme of the poem is in the nominative:

26 ان في الدير ابا فذ النـــــــــدى ونبيذ ورعابيب وصـــــــدح.

or to put in the indicative mood what should have been in the jussive:

27 ومن يسهل امرا فيه مصلحـــــــــة لكم فملعونٌ حقا وابن ملعـــون

The above verse has yet another of al-Tal's most frequent grammatical mistakes: his removal of the nunation for the sake of the metre as in his use of " ملعـــونٌ " above. Examples of grammatical mistakes in his poetry are too numerous to be quoted in detail in this work.

This brings us back to an examination of his attitude of nonchalance in the use of language. This basic nonchalance which prompted so many unwarranted mistakes and levelled down his poetry as well, induced him also to borrow extensively from the local everyday language around him, sometimes with some success:

28 ما زال قلبك ما يـــزال بـــــــه رمق ونفسي لم تزل خضـــــرا

and this:

29 او ما تراني والمشيب كما تراه بعارضيـــــةّ
ما زلت خفاق الفؤاد ولم تزل نفسي طريـــةّ

and this:

30 بين الخرابيش لا عمرى يضيع ســـــــدى ولا يضيق الهوى ذرعا باطوارى
ولا يرى الهبر بأسا في منادمـــــــتي وشرب كأس من الكنياك قعـــوارى

Many of his words are borrowed from the diction of his profession, law:

31 فحسب قانون الجزاء وحسب احكام الخزينـة

and this:

32 ونصوص حكـــم هواك ما برحـــــت مطروحة بدوائر الاجـــرا

This courage to use the contemporary language should not mean that al-Tal was exclusively 'modern' in his diction. His poem "'Ala 'l-Aṭlāl"[33] is a direct imitation of pre-Islamic poetry when the lonely poet would stand weeping on the deserted camp site of his beloved. Verses like the following are unacceptable from a modern poet:

34 وافنى فتاكم مكـث يوم وليلـــــــة على العيس ما ارخى بها الورك منكب

This is especially so when the poet was so contemporaneous in most of his poetry. However this is indicative of the natural conflict that could exist when the artistic instinct of an authentic poet has been nourished by a conventional education. In the case of al-Tal it would seem that this instinct was saved in most of his poetry because of the weak roots of the poetic tradition of the Classical type in that region, and the predominance of a Bedouin poetic tradition. But remnants of his formal education which definitely included the study of Classical poetry still remained as part of his poetic background, and were occasionally reflected in his work.

Al-Tal's poetry is characterised by an abundance of local colour. A Jordanian reader is quickly touched by the frequent mention of names of familiar places like "al-Ḥummar",[35] "Zīzā'",[36] "Wādī 'l-Sīr",[37] "Wādī 'l-Shitā",[38] "Māḥiṣ",[39] "Irbid",[40] "Al-Za'tarī",[41] "al-Fḥaiṣ",[42] "al-Ghaur",[43] "al-Salṭ",[44] "'Ammān",[45] etc. This is a long way from al-Kaẓimi's traditional mention of places in Najd, etc., which have often occurred in repetition in Classical peetry, as has been noted above. Al-Tal's mention of these places is coloured by an emotional affinity to them which makes it very effective. They are reminiscences of a happy local life, where the Circassian girls are fair-haired:

46 فهلم نشربها فان حبابهـــــــا ذهب كشعر الشركسية اشقـــــر

and the Jordanian girls are slim and black-eyed:

47 هذى القدود المأدبيـــــــــــة والعيون العجرميـــــــــــة
للسلط تنســـب ام تراهـــــــا عند حـــزرك اربديـــــــة

and the gypsy-girls dance and sing and drink with him:

48 يا بنـــت هاك فليـــــــــس من بأس بكأس تشربينـــــه

and:

49 اين الدفـــوف واين طبلك ايـــن فارعـــة القـــــــــــــوام
اين لمكحلـــة الـــــــــــتي للحاظها فتك السهام

and where the vines of "Gil'ad" (كـرم جلعـــاد) are rich with exquisite wines:

50 وكـرم جلعاد ما بعد التي عصـــــروا بالسلط منها تلذ الشرب صهبـاء

and the poppies of Jordanian plains and valleys bloom:

51 فاذن ورّب الراقصات الى منـــــــى لا بد من ان يورق الدحنـــون

like the cheeks of Jordanian girls:

52 خداك يا بنت من دحنون ديرتنـــــــا سبحانه بارئ الاردنّ من بـــارى

53 اليس وادى الشتا حوا جـــــــآذره ولون خد ا بنة الاردن دحنوني

and the whole valleys and slopes of Jordan in spring are rich with herbs and wild vegetation:

54 يا مي قد عاد الربيـــع وعـــــــاودت نفسي وساوس قصفه ودنانـــــه
....
يا مي قد صرّت جنادب حقلنـــــــــا وفراشه يختال في طيرانـــــه
....
هاتي جبينك فالتـــــلاع تبسمـــــــت للمكفهر الفظ في لمعانـــــه
وشعاب وادى السير سال لجينهـــــا كالبرق لما افترعن اسنانـــــه

These fields yield the best crops in the world:

55 وثغرة " الزعتريّ " افتر مبسمهـــــــا عن لون خدك اذ تغزوه انظـارى
وسهل اربد قد جاشـــت غواربـــــــه بكل اخاذ من عشب ونـــــوار
ان الشمالين في " حصن الصريح " لقـــد حالت الى عسل يابنت فاشتـــارى
....
ما بعد خبيز وادينا وخبزتـــــــــه وبضر عكوبنـــا مـــير لممتـــــار

This love of country is not really narrow nationalism as al-Nā'ūri, a Jordanian writer with fixed ideas on poetry and things would have us believe.[56] It is rather an authentic involvement in his own living world where his experiences take place. He is one of the earliest poets in this century who wrote nearly always[57] out of their own personal experience and although he was not unconcerned with the pan-Arabic scene,[58] his

emotional attachment was legitimately to his own immediate surroundings.

Local colour in his poetry involves also the delineation of his country's spiritual temper, its social and moral conditions, the diversity of its people (who included gypsies whom the poet immortalised in poems that gave him his greatest claim to originality, as well as Bedouins, and Circassians whose women folk, fair-haired and "beautiful", fascinated him), as well as its political conditions. Nothing more than this can be expected of any poet. Contemporary neo-Realists would be justified if they claimed al-Tal as one of their forerunners. For he was a natural hater of classes and the class system:

59 بين الخرابيش لا عبد ولا أَمَة ولا ارقاء في ازياء احرار
. . . . . .
بين الخرابيش لا حرص ولا طمع ولا احتراب على فلس ودينار
الكل زط مساواة محققة تنفي الفوارق بين الجار والجار

A great lover of freedom, his kind of freedom was total, and not limited to political freedom and social justice as in the case of most poets of his generation and earlier. The gypsies, perhaps the most degraded class in society, were not spoken of with condescension and pity, but were elevated, sought, loved and even envied by him.[60] A district attorney is chided by him for not receiving one of them, when he tried to visit him:

61 يا مدعي عام اللواء وانت من فهم القضية
الهبر جاءك للسلام فكيف تمنعه التحية
الأن كسوته ممزقة وهيئته زرية ؟
فاسرع وكفر يا هداك الله عن هذى الخطية .

This is a far step from the poets who pleaded for charity to the poor and sick, such as al-Raṣāfi for example. This is the glorification of human dignity as it had never before been glorified in modern Arabic poetry, a natural, spontaneous, unstudied attitude of human kinship, and love of freedom.

This love of freedom enveloped also the personal freedom of the individual as well. It examines the relationship of the individual to society, and his rejection of fossilised social taboos:

62 ماذا على الناس من لهوى ومن عبثـــي ماذا على الناس من جهلي وعرفانـي
.....
ماذا على الناس من حـــبي مكحلـــة بين الخرابيش اهواها وتهوانـــي

and this:

63 قالوا ذوو الشأن في عمان تغضبهـــم صراحتي ولذا افتوا بحرمانـــي
قالوا ذوو الشأن في عمان قد برمـــوا بمسلكي واصطفائي رهط مجـــان
واستنكروا شر استنكار هرولـــتي الى الخرابيش مع صحبي وندمانـي

and this in which he asserts his freedom to love:

64 قالوا يحب اجل اني احب متـــى كان الهوى سبة يا اهل عمـــان ؟

But it examines also the relationship of the individual to God and religion. A fiery rebellion against religious sanctimony was only mitigated by a light-hearted sense of humour and a lingering faith in God. In a chapter he wrote entitled "My friends, the gypsies", which he never finished, he declares that a part of his love which he will never lose, goes to God, but that another part of him is directed towards merriment and enjoyment of love ... but this without debauchery. "I am a pursuer of love, completely fascinated by beauty wherever it is. Beauty in my view is the source of all good and good is the source of all pleasure ..."[65] This is also the gist of his eternal argument with al-Sheikh ʿAbbūd al-Najjār, a man from Ḥijāz who was affiliated to the court until his promotion as a judge of the Moslim Court a few years before his death in 1940.[66] Al-Tal, in fact, was a friend of al-Sheikh ʿAbbūd[67] who, it seems, persisted in advising him to change his way of life,[68] especially drinking:

69 يرى مواعظه وقفا على اذنـــي وان رأس التقى زجرى وانـــذارى
كأن عمان لم تعرف اخا طـــرب غيرى يحجّ الى حانوت خمـــار
يا شيخ حسبك ادنى الاثم منزلـــة من رحمة الله ما تدعوه اوزارى

and this:

70 اكلّ يومين ترمينـــي بموعظـــة فضفاضة نسجها فقه وافتـــراء
عبود يا شيخ اني لم اعد عرضـــا للنا س يرمونه بالعتب مـــا شاءوا
عبود يا شيخ يا من في مجالسـه "للام" همس وللمعراج ضوضـــاء
بأى قول لقد صارت محرمـــة على الندامى واهل الحظ بيـــراء
يا شيخ ما العلم ؟ حسب المرء معرفة ان الشفاء بوادى السهر لميـــاء

Al-Tal was obsessed by ʻAbbūd and many of his poems refer to him directly or indirectly, sometimes seriously as in the following:

71 واذا فقيه القوم اسهب واعظـــــــا دعني بغي ضلا لـــــتي اتعثـــر

and sometimes sarcastically:

72 هاتها واشرب ودع عبـــــــود مـــــن شرح متن الام يستهويـه متـــح

and this:

73 وصاحب من بني النجـــــارعمتـــــه كانما هي باراشوت طيـــــار

and this:

74 كعمامة الاستاذ عبود المزركشة المتينـة

ʻAbbūd became the archtype of the spoil-sport religious preacher in Al-Tal's poetry. With him there is sometimes a mention of Ḥamzah al-ʻArabı,[75] but it is ʻAbbūd who exemplifies the archtype. Such a creation is unprecedented in modern Arabic poetry. Al-Tal's preoccupation with him shows, perhaps, his internal preoccupation with the idea of good and evil, and in the tradition of Abū Nuwās, he consoles himself that God is a great forgiver:

76 يا شيخ حسبك ،ادني الاثم منزلـــــة من رحمة الله ماتدعوه او زارى

Al-Tal's love of wine and drinking is sometimes explained by him in his poetry as an escape from the unhappy public and spiritual conditions of his country:

77 والناس كالكأس رجس والوجود كمـــــا ايقنت حملانه بالفتك ذوءبانـــــا
والكون غول لعمرى لست فيـــــه ارى غير السعالى تناجي اليوم غيلانـــا
....
ابعد هذا اجب يا شيخ هل حـــــرج علّي اما قضيت العمر سكرانـــــا ؟

But one who reads his poetry can hardly agree with him that he drinks solely in order to be able to bear life. The man loved to drink as a part of his rather torrential love of life. "I am," he said in his chapter on the gypsies, "a merry man. But ... I am Platonic in my ways and Epicurian in my creed. In drinking, I am like al-Khayyām, and in my quest, I am like Diogene."[78]

Possibly the first Bohemian in modern Arabic poetry, his Bohemianism

is not animal, but is a chaotic mixture of love of freedom (or perhaps an incapacity to conform) and of merriment, a rejection of life as it was lived around him and of love of life in its essence. It is a very attractive, very acceptable kind of Bohemianism. One might even say that his kind of revelry was, in part, an attempt at holding desperately to the original simplicity of Jordanian life, which embodied solely the basic elements and rejected the wavering and complicated route of developing modernity. It is a thirst and a quest for the basic innocence which he saw being defiled day by day. His poem "Anfās ʿĪd al-Fiṣḥ"[79] is a very good example of this attitude:

80 ان في بعد الفتى عن موطـــن ... سامه الغوغاء ارهاقا لربـــح

... ...

موطني الاردنّ لكني بـــه ... "كلما داويت جرحا سال جرح"

وبنفسي رحلة عن ارضـــه ... علّه يشفي من الارهاق نـــزح

كل ما ارجوه لو ان منـــى ... عاثر الجد اذا يرجو تصـــحّ

ان اري لي بيت شعر حولـــه * ... من ثلايا قوطك السرحان سـرح

في فلاة ليس للعلج بهـــا ... حية تسعى وثعبان يفـــح

Al-Tal depicted another personality in several of his poems. This was that of his gypsy friend, "al-Habr", However, this personality, despite al-Tal's warm and interesting delineation of it, falls below that of al-Sheikh ʿAbbūd in that it never becomes a symbol or an archtype. His poems on him are often original and his description of him is vivid and entertaining;[81] sometimes with mild humour lurking behind.[82]

The poet of the gypsies as he is commonly known by his countrymen,[83] al-Tal's chaotic life, his kind of courage which did not hesitate to attack the whole system of public life, of a fast growing bureaucracy and of a quickly developing class consciousness, as well as the long venerated religious sanctimony, immediately signalled him out as an outsider. In the totality of his rejection and rebellion he is unrivalled among his

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* He is talking to his wife, ʿAufah; Sirḥān is the name of her Bedouin tribe.

contemporaries and has not yet been surpassed by a new generation of poets among whom many outsiders exist. Al-Tal can be emphatically regarded as the first spiritual exile in modern Arabic poetry.[84]

It is regrettable that al-Tal suffered from a relative obscurity in the Arab world during his life-time, when Arabic poetry could have benefited to good advantage by his experiment and his kind of courage. This is not and cannot be due, as Muṭlaq says,[85] to his interest solely in Jordanian affairs and his involvement only in its life and landscape, which gave him, as Muṭlaq asserts, a limited outlook on life.[86] Al-Tal's obscurity is due, rather, to the limited cultural links between Trans-Jordan and the rest of the Arab world with the possible exception of Palestine.

In fact, al-Tal's outlook on life is far from limited. This poet had very wide dimensions which unfortunately were checked by a limited culture and a lack of contact with superior world poetry. His knowledge of Persian and Turkish,[87] and his fondness for al-Khayyām quartets,[88] influenced his poetry only to a limited extent. But his basic gift was great.

An example of his wider dimensions is his elegy on al-Habr, who was mistakenly reported dead to him.[89] His approach in the first part of the poem was most original. His 'dead' gypsy friend, he said, when buried, had no mourners nor caused agonising suffering among the gypsies. Their drums sounded, the wine drinkers drank and enjoyed life, the music players played and Su'ād, the famous gypsy dancer, performed her dances. Everything went on as before, and nothing passed with his passing. This is completely unconventional, new.[90]

The diwan of Muṣṭafa Wahbi al-Tal has sixty-six poems, short and long. Most of his poems are in the traditional two hemistich form. He used in many of them shorter metres, majzū'āt and resorted mostly to quick metres like al-kāmil (in which he has twenty-three poems) and al-basīṭ, in which he has thirteen poems) and al-hajaz (in which he has eight

poems). These seem appropriate with his lively mood. However, two of the poems in the collection merit consideration here because they are written in free verse of the type used in the fifties. It has been mentioned in the chapter on Abū Shādi that in this type the poet abandons the two hemistich form and varies the number of feet from one line to another, keeping to the same metre. However, it is important to voice the doubt here that these two poems in free verse have been really written by al-Tal himself.

The date given for the two poems is 1941 and 1942. The first successful experiments in free verse were written in 1947 in Iraq by poets who had had a sound Western poetic education. Al-Tal neither had the experience, the knowledge nor the patience to experiment with free verse and produce a long poem like the poem "Matā?"[91] written as is claimed in the dıwan[92] in 1941.

In the second place, the mood of the poems and their general spirit is unlike that of al-Tal. In verses like the following the virile bravado of al-Tal and his blithe spirit when in the presence of a beautiful woman are completely absent:

93 متى سيتاح لي ان استميح رجاءك العـذرا ؟
غداة رغبت ان ابقى لديك دقيقة اخرى
ولكني لفرط حماقتي لم استطع صبرا
وسارعت الخطى سرا
كأني مجرم فـرا
ولا تسلي الى اين
الى حيث الخداع يعانق النكران والغدرا

This is despite the fact that some of al-Tal's diction has been used in the two poems, phrases like "رجراجة الكفليـــن",[94] "وثابـة النهـــد",[95] "النظـــرة الشـــــزرة",[96] and others.

In the third place, no critic or reader among those acquainted with al-Tal's poetry came forward with the serious claim that a successful

experiment in free verse has first been made in Jordan in 1941 by al-Tal. The controversy as to who first wrote successful free verse in Arabic in Iraq has been going on so long that it should have merited a discussion of al-Tal's earlier experiment,[97] had such an experiment really taken place. One suspects that these two poems were written later on by another Jordanian and added to al-Tal's collection, probably to claim for al-Tal or for Jordan the precedence in writing free verse.

(ii) Some Conventional Influences

The original creativity of al-Tal was not destined, however, to be the beginning of an independent current in Jordanian poetry, flowing towards an even greater originality and increasing modernity. For other forces, steeped in conventionalism, were gathering contemporaneously with al-Tal's experiment, which were to cut short its continued effect on other poets of his country. These forces gathered, in the fashion of older days, around the small court of Emir 'Abdullah ibn al-Ḥusain (as he then was called). The Emir was a poet himself and a lover of Classical poetry. He had arrived in 1920 from his original country, Ḥijāz, for which he retained a permanent longing, in the fashion of the ancient desert poets. He was an old fashioned poet in the Classical tradition not only of al-Sharīf al-Raḍi, of whom he seems to have been fond,[98] but also of more ancient poets whose spirit and style he often reflects in his poetry. He has no published diwan, but about sixteen poems of his are in the possession of 'Ali Naṣūḥ al-Ṭāhir from which Asad quotes.[99] Taysīr Ẓubyān in his book Al-Malik 'Abdullah kamā 'Araftuh (Amman, 1967) also quotes several poems and passages of poems, some of which had been published in Ẓubyān's newspaper, Al-Jazīrah which was started in 1939. Emir 'Abdullah seems to have dabbled in mu'āradāt and tashṭīr of Classical poems,[100] a hobby apparently too old fashioned for the twenties and thirties. He also wrote love poems and poetry of longing for his country treating both themes in a very conventional

manner:

101
تشوقت ماء بالاباطح سلسلا ... وقد نضبت بالشام كل شنانـي
فما ام خشف ترتعي الضال هزه ... نسيم تزجيه الهبائب وانـي
اغارت عليه الطلس وهي سواغب ... تجرّ اليه الموت بالـذألان
بأوجد مني يوم اترك مربعي ... " بسلع " الى نزال ارض معان

The language and ideas of these verses are particularly archaic. An example of his conventional love poetry is the following:

102
حمامة وادينا المطار عسيرا ... اقيمي فهذي روضة وغدير
اقيمي لعلي ان ارى لي فرصة ... تقربني من حيّكم وتجير

One can only conjecture a judgement according to the examples quoted by Asad and Ẓubyān. A poem about a political theme[103] shows an immediate change in diction and style because the prince was writing about a current theme which concerned him deeply:

104
ذكرت منازلا بجوار وجّ ... فحييت المنازل والديارا
....
نزحنا تاركين بها رجالا ... من الاعوان خلناهم خيارا
نزحنا كي نناضل عن بلاد ... لمحنا للعدو بها شرارا
وكان نزوحنا انا دعينا ... فلبينا نداء من استجارا
فكان جزاؤنا ممن تركنا ... ببلدتنا عقوقا لا انتصارا

This poem employs a more modern diction. A much simpler language is employed, too, in the poems the Emir extemporaneously said or dictated.[105]

At any rate, the only correct judgement one can give on the Emir's role in poetic activity in Jordan is that a trend towards more conventionalism in poetry is inadvertently promoted. For the Emir did encourage poets and men of letters to flock to his court and did indulge in poetic competitions with them,[106] and in a sort of witty, light-hearted poetic correspondence with some of them.[107] The poets who flocked to his court from other Arab countries were all very conservative poets. The most outstanding among them were Khairi al-Dīn al-Zirikli, al-Sheikh Fu'ād

al-Khaṭīb,[108] and al-Emīr ʿĀdil Arslān.

The poetic and literary activity encouraged by Emir ʿAbdullah in the twenties, thirties and forties were recognised by the Jordanian Jiryis al-Qusūs, writing in al-Risālah , in 1936.[109] "A new literary life", he says, "has crept into Trans-Jordan, a life we did not know before the /establishment/ of the emirate."[110] He says that the government opened schools and sent some students out to study, and that there was a new awakening among the people to educate their children. He also adds that Egyptian journalism, moreover, was nourishing the young with its "fine literature", especially al-Risālah magazine.

"But", the writer continues, "no author in the true sense of the word has yet appeared in Trans-Jordan, nor any truly productive man of letters who takes his material and theme from life."[111] He then mentions some writers and poets among whom he names Muṣṭafa Wahbi al-Tal, "the poet of the gypsies",[112] without so much as noting the poet's originality and authenticity. One can conclude here that what he meant by poetry of "life" was perhaps the direct political and social poetry which was being written in abundance in Palestine at that time, on the other bank of the Jordan.

He concludes by saying that "literary life in Trans-Jordan was weak and scant if compared with that of other Arab countries, but that its progress and development, at the surprising pace it was then going on, encourages optimism".[113]

2. PALESTINE

(i) The Forces of Change: Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān

Known as the foremost poet in Palestine[114] during the twenties and thirties, Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān (1905-1941) brought poetry in Palestine to a contemporaneous level and modernized it to some extent. He came from Nablus, the Biblical Sichem, a town built in the valley between two mountains and climbing a little way up either side. During the mandatory

days, when Tūqān was writing, Nablus and the villages surrounding it were all known as "Jabal al-Nār" (the mountain of fire), because it was in this area that the Palestine rebels found a stronghold for themselves: a vantage point from which to attack and a good shelter when hiding out. To the formidability of the mountain landscape was added the fiery and highly patriotic disposition of the people of Nablus and its surrounding villages, which swarmed with rebels. Apart from the ancient Samaritans who had always lived there and had become a part of its population, no Jew was able to settle there, or to acquire either lands or possessions in the area. Rebellion and resistance seem to have been a characteristic of the town's history.[115] Another attribute is its love of learning.[116] As far back as the first decades of this century and probably earlier, the people of Nablus seem to have sought more learning than the town was capable of giving them. They went to Beirut, Istanbul and other cities to study in their higher institutes.[117] But these educated young men were known to reject their town's conservatism afterwards and to settle in more liberal towns of Palestine or in other Arab countries.[118] This is a remarkable phenomenon because it meant that there was a constant trickle of emigration from the town which persists, even up to this day in a sort of narrow conservatism.[119] The lack of personal freedom in the town was later to be a constant cause of unhappiness and rebellion for its famous woman poet, Fadwa Tūqān, Ibrāhīm's sister, who was not able to emigrate.

The town played an important role in the life and poetry of Ibrāhīm Tūqān. His verse reflected the town's fiery nationalistic temperament. It was a record not only of political events in Palestine in the twenties and thirties, but also of the character of its heroic struggle against Zionism as well as of the ignorance, stagnation, stupor and selfishness that undermined its vitality and the elements of treason and treachery that were finally to bring it to its tragic end in 1948, seven years after the poet's death.

The traditions of his family were also a great help to the poet. The family seems to have had a traditional love of learning. Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān is described as being encouraged by his grandfather who himself created some poetry and 'zajal'. His mother is also described as having been fond of heroic literature in Arabic.[120] His father was anxious that Ibrāhīm and the rest of the children should study the Quran[121] of which Ibrāhīm grew very fond, reading it through every Ramaḍān.[122]

In his elementary education Ibrāhīm was also fortunate, for he studied between 1914-1918 at a good school in Nablus (al-Madrasah al-Rashādiyyah al-Gharbiyyah). His teachers were lovers of literature. One of them wrote poetry and another was an Azhar-educated man who had come into direct contact with the poetry of the neo-Classicists in Egypt.[124] Their method of teaching Arabic literature seems to have been relatively 'modern' and the young pupil came to know the poetry of Shauqi, Ḥāfiẓ and Muṭrān very early in life, as well as that of the other contemporary Arab poets of the older generation.[125]

His secondary education was completed at St. George's missionary school (commonly known in Arabic as al-Muṭrān) in Jerusalem,[126] where he must have studied English. During that time he also came under the influence of a great educator, Nakhlah Zuraiq,[127] whose teaching post at the English College in Jerusalem seems to have left a tremendous literary and national influence on his students and, as in the case of Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān, on other young men who came into contact with him.[128]

In 1923 Ibrāhīm went to the American University in Beirut where he stayed until 1929.[129] He studied with masters well-versed in Classicism among whom was Anīs al-Khouri al-Maqdisi.[130] It was in Beirut as he approached manhood that his life as a poet really began.[131] He found great encouragement from the press there which published his poems gladly,[132] and at the university he met poets from other Arab countries such as the Iraqian Ḥāfiẓ al-Jamīl and the Syrian Wajīh al-Bārūdi. He also met there

his friend, admirer and later biographer, the Lebanese writer ʿUmar Farroukh.[133] It was also in this relatively free atmosphere that he was able to experience love as he came into contact both in college and outside with feminine beauty and tenderness.[134] He commemorates this in verse:

اول عهدي بفنون الهوى بيروت انعم بالهوى الاول [135]

All during his university years, however, he was afflicted with recurrent bouts of stomach trouble and an ulcer seems to have been forming then, a disease which was eventually to cause his premature death.[136]

For twelve years after graduating at the A.U.B. until his death in 1941, Ṭūqān changed several jobs going from teaching which he hated[137] to office work, and moving about between Nablus, Jerusalem, Beirut and Baghdad.[138] He visited Egypt early, for medical treatment, and seems to have enjoyed his stay in Cairo which offered even greater pleasures than Beirut. Of Egypt he wrote:

[139]

كأنها وكأن الليل منصدعا بنورها سر صدر غير مكنون
والازبكية في الامساء راقصة لها غلائل من شتى الرياحين
. . . . . .
لو انشب الموت بي اظفاره لكفى (بام كلثوم) ان تشدو فتحييني
هذا ومصر بساتين منمقة (شبابها) بعض ازهار البساتين
خاضوا الميادين من جد ومن لعب فاحرزوا السبق في كل الميادين

However, he seems to have received little attention from the Egyptians:

[140] احبّ مصر ولكن مصر راغبة عني فتعرض من حين الى حين
. . . . . .
وما عتبت على هجر تدل به ان الدلال يمنّيني ويغريني

Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān's poetry is noted for its sincerity and emotional veracity. His verse is clear and direct, the diction simple and well-chosen, and the phrases powerful and often terse. He clearly shows the effect of the Classical literature and poetry on him[141] as well as of the Quran.[142] However, despite the fact that he got acquainted with such English Romantics as Shelley, Keats, Coleridge and Byron, and according to Asad knew some Turkish, French, German and elementary Spanish,[143] he did not reflect many direct influences of foreign poetry. It is amazing that

Asad does not comment on the lack of direct effects in Ṭūqān's poetry of his knowledge of English literature; for a critic cannot help but realise that in Ṭūqān's poetry there is a marked absence of a direct echo of the English poets he is said to have read so well. However, this should not be a mark of anything but genuine talent in the poet. For there is a clear if subtle change in sensibility in him which must be accounted for by his education and his more modernity of outlook. At his hands poetry, for the first time in Palestine, immediately changed to a modern attitude, telling in concise, direct phrases of the poet's own experience and of that of his own people, in terms sometimes crisp and angry, sometimes bitterly sarcastic, sometimes gentle and chivalrous. He recognised the ills of the nation and in prophetic, clear utterances drew his terrifying vision of imminent ruin and exile:

144 يا قـــوم ليس عدوكـــم ممن يليـــن ويرحـــم
يا قـــوم ليس امامكـــم الا الجلاء فحزمـــوا

and again talking to his countryman:

145 وانت كما عهدتك لا تبالـــي بغير مظاهر العبث الرخـــاص
مصيرك بات يلمسه الادانـــي وسار حديثه بين الاقاصـــي
فلا رحب القصور غدا ببـــاق لساكنها ولا ضيق الخصـــاص

and this:

146 هيهـات ذلك ان في بيع الثرى فقد الثـــراء
فيه الرحيل عن الربوع غدا الى وادى الفنـــاء

A man who loved life and recognised its vital forces, Ṭūqān sang songs of praise and glory to the heroic struggle of his country's youth,[147] rejecting fully and uncompromisingly the forces of stupor, evil and treachery that were sapping its vitality.[148] The sanctified figure of the hero, the rebel and the martyr whose courage and sacrifice are beyond imagination is drawn vividly:

149 عبس الخطـــب فابتســـم وطفى الهول فاقتحـــم

Even death itself is afraid of him:

150 هو بالباب واقـــف والردى منه خائـــف
فاهدئـي يا عواصـف خجلا من جراءتـــه

and his spirit of rebellion is stronger than a storm:

151 نفسه طوع همـــة وجمت دونها الهمـــم
تلتقي في مزاجهـــا بالاعاصـــير والحمـــم

These noble figures stand in his poetry side by side with the debased figures of some of Palestine's unworthy children: of the land broker of whom even

152 ابليس اعلن صاغرا فلا ســـه لما تحقق عنده اغراؤهـــا

and who with men like him are a scourge to the country:

153 وطني مبتلى بعصبة " دلّالين " لا يتقون فيه اللـه

and of the figure of the self-seeking politician who plagues the country:

154 والله ليس هنـــاك الا كل قناص السياســـة

and who with his like are:

155 معازيل الا من العنعنـــات مشاغيل عن كل ما يكـــرم

and men of words without action:

156 انتم رجال خطابات منمقـــة كما علمنا وابطال (احتجاجـات)
وقد شبعتم ظهورا في (مظاهـــرة) (مشروعة) وسكرتم بالهتافـــات

When he talks of the brave and heroic he is tense, terse and effective:

157

عبس الخطب فابتســم وطغى الهول فاقتحـــم
رابط الجأش والنهـــى ثابت القلب والقـــدم
نفسه طوع همـــة وجمت دونهـا الهمـــم
تلتقي في مزاجهـــا بالاعاصير والحمـــم

and this:

158

لا تسل عن سلامـــته روحه فوق راحتـــه
بدلتـــه همومـــه كفنا من وسادتـــه
يرقب الساعة الـــتي بعدها هول ساعتـــه

But when he talks of the feuding, glory-seeking leaders, he can be bitingly ironical:

159
أنـــتم المخلصـون للوطنيـــــة انتم الحاملـون عبء القضيـــة
انتم العطلـــون من غـير قـــول بارك الله في النفوس القويـــة

He asks them in another poem:

160
هل لديكم سياسة غير هذا القول تحيي النفوس قواهـــا
صكّت الالسن المسامع حتى لقيت من ضجيجكم ما كفاهـــا
عرف الناس والمنابر والاقلام افضالكم فهاتوا سواهـــا
كلكم بارع بليغ ــ بحمد الله ــ طب بحالنا ودواهـــا

His sarcasm mixes with anger and contempt:

161 انمـــا عدة الضعيـــف "احتجـــاج " لم يجاوز حد السطور احتدامـــه

This complete participation and involvement in his country's life and struggle, which was a central theme in his poetry, gave him quick and decisive fame. Like 'Umar Abū Rīshah, his second major theme was woman. He does not have Abū Rīshah's sophistication in his love poetry, nor his fluctuation between his passion for woman and his veneration of her. He was rather a heartily realistic poet who loved woman's beauty greatly:

162
واما وقلب قـد رأى في الساجديـن تقلبـــه
صلى لجبار الجمـال ولا يزال معذبـــــه

but whose basic attitude was that of 'gather ye rose buds while ye may'. Love to him came easily, almost too easily, and did not involve much suffering and philosophising. A gentleness as that shown in his poem "Ḥairah"[163] and a realistic understanding[164] of social mores imposed upon the young emancipated girl of the twenties and thirties, as in his poem "Fī 'l-Maktabah",[165] were counterbalanced by a mischievous approach to love and sex, when he found opportunity for it, as in his poem "Fī Dair Qiddīs"[166] in which he says:

167
ما عرش بلقيس في ابان دولتهـــــا ولا سليمان مزفوفا لبلقيـــــس
يوما باعظم منا في السريـــر وقـــد دام العناق الى قرع النواقيـــس

However, he sometimes arrived at pornography, but these pornographic poems were never published. They were and still are memorized by many of his contemporaries and from the ones in circulation a critic can detect very little art. But in these and in the more temperate ones published in his collection there is a light-hearted attitude, often a merriment, which has never failed to charm his readers. But his love poetry is neither deep nor does it embody a vision. The devilment in his pornographic poems and the ardour of his nationalistic poems with their critical candour, acted like a catharsis for a people suffering from both political suppression and emotional and sexual repression.

Nationalism and love, however, were not the only themes which the poet treated. He wrote some poems of occasion, in the typical fashion of the day,[168] and some poems related to other experiences of his life. His poem "Malā'ikat al-Raḥmah"[169] on the nurses who looked after him when he was ill won great popularity because of its gentle sentiment, its musical rhythms and original rhyme , and also because of the interesting, highly original approach the poet took when he drew the analogy between the nurses and the white doves playing around the pond:

170

بيضٍ الحمائم حسبهـــــن اني اردد سجعنـــــــه
رمز السلامة والوداعة منذ بدء الخلـــــق هنـــــــــه
في كـل روضٍ فـــوق دانية القطـــوف لهن انـــــــــه
....

171

المحسنات الى المريـــــض غدون اشباها لهنـــــــه
الـــروض كالمستشفيـــــات دواوها ايناسهنـــــــه

Ṭūqān, moreover, wrote many elegies. His best is possibly his elegy on King Faiṣal, in 1934.[172] But most of his elegiac poetry is traditional when the funeral of the dead man is described as great to denote his greatness:

173 قد شيعـوه الى قبر يحف بـــــه من المهابة اتبـاع واشيـــاع

and places and abodes where the dead man lived or which he frequented have wept for him and mourned his loss:

174 اغمدا ن ما يبكيـك يا كعبـة الهدى وفيم الاسى يا هيكل الفضل والندى

The same philosophy about death persists as it was in Classical poetry. Death in this philosophy is a road which everyone will tread:

175 طريق الردى مهما يطل يلقه الـردى قصيرا وان يوعر يجده ممهـــــدا
وموت الفتى تحني الثمانون ظهـره كموت الفتى في ميعة العمر امـردا

The dead man enjoyed supreme qualities of character and beauty:

176 عرفت اديبا حميد الخصـــــال واحببت فيه الذكي اللبيـــب
وروحا على القلب مثل النســـيم يهب فينعش قلب الكئيـــب

and, moreover, was certainly in Paradise:

177 وسعيد من نال مثل سعيـــد بعد دار الفناء دار الخلـــود

One different element in his elegies is the frequent exploitation of the topic to talk about national problems. In his elegy on his Lebanese teacher, Jabr Ḍūmiṭ, he suddenly switches to talk about Balfour, the British peer in whose name the promise was given to the Jews of a national home in Palestine:

173 وما قهر الموت القوى سوى امـــرئ يخلف بين الناس ذكرا مخلـــدا
يخلف طيب الذكر لا كالذى قضـــى وخلف وعدا في فلسطين انكـــدا
فابكى به قوما واضحـــك امـــــة ابى الله الا ان تهيم تشـــردا

He might also resort, at certain points in his elegies, to attack the feuds and ills that were obstructing the struggle of the nation and producing quick disaster, as in the following in which he weeps a Palestinian leader:

179 يا موطنا في ثـراه غاب سادتـــــه لو كان يخجل من باعوك ما باعـوا

One wonders why this poet, who spent most of his adult life suffering from disease and a weak constitution, did not tackle the question of illness and death more deeply and poignantly.[180] Ibrahīm Ṭūqān was well aware of his failing health and of the possibility of imminent death:

181 ارى الثلاثين ستمـدو بيـــــه مغيرة افراسها في اقـــــتراب
وبعد عشر يلتوى عوديـــــه وينضب الزيت ويخبو الشهـــاب

His tone in this part of the poem is sad and very effective:

182

يلذ لي يا عين ان تسهدي — وتشترى الصفو بطيب الكرى
لي رقدة طويلة في غد — لله ما اعمقها في الثرى
الم ترَي طير الصبافي يدي — اخشى مع الغفلة ان ينفرا
طال جناحاه وقد يهتدي — الى اعالي دوحه مبكرا

In these two quotations one finds some of Ṭūqān's noblest images ever. The genuine tone of sad acceptance of a possible imminent fate, however, does not persist throughout the poem, which begins and ends as a love song to a Spanish girl. The idea of a possibly premature death is not an incentive for him to philosophise or attempt a reflection on death, for there are no metaphysical tendencies in Ṭūqān. It is rather an incentive for him to wish to get more pleasure out of life, before it ends:

يلذ لي يا عين ان تسهدي — وتشترى الصفو بطيب الكرى

A proof of Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān's uncertain period in poetic development as he emerged from a relatively arid poetic background in Palestine to a modern sensibility, is the great difference in level between his various images. The beautiful images one encounters in the previous examples is not always matched by similar creativity. Frequently his images are banal and outworn, and Nature to him is often as it was to the old Classical poet, a wealth of outer images to be used in direct physical description:

183 ابعدت في جنح الدجى طائفا — كلمة البرق سرى خاطفا

The flicker of lightning is a most outworn image, not only in poetry but also in daily conversation. Nature in the following examples gives him the same outer comparisons which it gave to his Classical forbears:

184

ماذا اصاب الروض حتى ذوى — والهفا والغصن حتى التوى

and this:

185

جنة الحسن لديها — طيبها وقف عليها
وردها في وجنتيها — ثمل من مقلتيها

هي ريحانة قلبي
ليتها كانت بقربي

He used allegory in his poem "Maṣra' Bulbul"[186] (The death of a bulbul, in which the thrush is a symbol of beguiled youth, the rose a symbol of the pleasure girl and the garden a symbol of the tavern or play house.) As it is clear, these symbols are not very adequate or original. But some of his poems are characterized by movement and vividness. Ṭūqān, indeed, can be very effective in this aspect. His poem "Ḥairah" is a perfect example of both psychological and physical movement in the poem.

Form in his poetry also underwent some experimentation. Although his basic form is the Classical two hemistich form, there is a conscious attempt at variation. He wrote many poems in stanza form where the variations of rhymes and/or feet in one stanza are faithfully repeated in the other stanzas, Muwashshaḥ-like.

However, he was not always successful in his choice of variations. His poem "Al-Thulāthā' al-Ḥamrā'",[187] an elegy on three young men hanged in Palestine in 1929, is too elaborate in its variations to suit the sad, explosive occasion when the simplest form would seem to be more appropriate:

[188]

a	لما تعرض نجمك المنحوس	a	وترنحت بعرى الحبال رؤوس
a	ناح الاذان واعول الناقوس	a	فالليل اكدر والنهار عبوس
b	طفقت تثور عواصف	b	وعواطف
b	والموت حينا طائف	b	او خاطف
x	والمعول الابدي يمعن في الثرى	c	ليردهم في قلبه المتحجر

The second stanza also goes on like this, with different rhymes, except for the last rhyme, c, which is repeated throughout (dddd. eeee. xc.).

Such an elaborate form which varies the length of verses as well as the rhymes employs a certain amount of artifice which does not suit the heightened occasion. Moments of intense feeling such as the above moment require the greatest simplicity of style, language and metaphor.[189] However, Ṭūqān succeeded in arriving at great stylistic effect in his famous poem "Malā'ikat al-Raḥmah" in which the nurses, in their white uniforms, are compared to white pigeons and in which the rhythm of the

short verses and the original rhyme employed echo the cooing of the pigeons and their quick, blithe hopping around the fountain. This is a perfect example of the poem in which a perfect harmony between form and content is achieved.

We have observed from the above discussion that Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān's experiment tended towards a modernization of poetry in Palestine but within the Classical framework. By 'Classical' here is meant that Ṭūqān preserved in himself many of the Classical attributes of old Arabic poetry: its realism and factual representation of things, its terse phraseology and its powerful and precise diction. But his spirit was modern and he only spoke of his actual times and experiences, on the personal and national spheres. Even up till now he remains one of the few poets who succeeded in introducing the element of irony and sarcasm into poetry with great effect, and despite a Classical framework, his personality is crystal clear and his poetry, unlike that of the neo-Classicists is a true record of his life. Despite his rebellion and rejection, as well as his illness, he never dallied in the escapist Romanticism that was being written in the thirties elsewhere in the Arab world, especially in Egypt. He remained down to earth but was able to soar in his glorification of the martyrs and rebels of his country, to unlimited heights. His imagination kept well within limits and even his attempts at variation in form were regularized and tended towards symmetry and order. His poetry is one of the best examples of spontaneously 'engaged' poetry which roved freely among the various experiences of life.

(ii) Other Poetic Experiments

The cavalier poet: In the village of 'Anabta, just a short distance from Nablus, a younger contemporary to Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān was born, the poet 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd (1913-1948). He is known as the cavalier poet[190] or the poet martyr.[191] Together with Ṭūqān he helped to bring poetry in Palestine to the warmth of life and to the heat of the country's struggle

for survival. Ṭūqān's role as a political critic seems pale in comparison with ʿAbd al-Raḥīm's role as the cavalier poet who exemplified in his poetry and life, and then finally in his death, the ideals of strife as a continuous personal, even physical involvement:

192

دعا الوطن الذبيح الى الجهـــــاد ... فخفّ لفرط غبطته فـــــؤادي
وسابقت الرياح ولا افتخـــــار ... اليس عليّ ان افدي بـــــلادي
وقلت لمن يخاف من المنايـــــا ... اتفرق من مجابهة العـــوادي ؟

It is his own personal fight, which should be everyone else's too:

193

قل "لا" وأتبعها الفعال ولا تخـــف ... وانظر هنالك كيف تحدي الهـام
اصهر بنارك غل عنفك ينصهـــر ... فعلى الجماجم تركز الاعـــلام
واغصب حقوقك دط لا تستجدهـــا ... ان الالى سلبوا الحقوق لئـــام
هذى طريقك للحياة فلا تحـــد ... قد سارها من قبلك القســـام *

ʿAbd al-Raḥīm died on the battlefield in 1948, having fought against the aggressor since his early youth.[194] He fell just before his country itself fell an unhappy victim to a tragic fate which he, like his more famous contemporary Ṭūqān, had prophesied. He had said as early as 1935, addressing Saʿūd bin ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, then only a prince, on the latter's visit to Jerusalem and al-Aqṣā Mosque:

195

يا ذا الامـير امام عينك شاعـــر ... ضمت على الشكوى المريرة اضلعـه
المسجد الاقصى ،اجئت تـــزوره ... ام جئت من قبل الضياع تودعـــه **
حرم تباح لكل اوكع آبـــق ... ولكل افاق شريد اربعـــه
وغدا وما ادناه ،لا يبقى ســـوى ... دمع لنا يهمي وسن نقرعـــه

The son of a poet[196] who belonged to the conventional school of the older generation in Palestine, he did his secondary education at al-Najāḥ College in Nablus,[197] one of the most famous secondary schools in mandatory Palestine. This was where he met Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān with whom he became friendly.[198] He later became a teacher at this College.[199]

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* Al-Qassām was a famous rebel in the thirties, who died fighting in the vicinity of Mount Carmel, Haifa.

** This verse is known to have raised the poet, yet unknown, to immediate fame.

His poetry carries the marks of an exclusively Classical education in Arabic. He was very fond of al-Mutanabbi[200] whose poetic style and virile spirit he echoed, especially in his most famous poem:

ساحمل روحي على راحتي واري بها في مهاوي الردى [201]

This poem is a noble example of poetry alive and glowing with the clash of battle and the hovering shadow of a magnificent death. The death impulse in the following verse has no sinister implications, nor does it reflect as that of the Tunisian poet al-Shābbi, a deep longing for it:

لعمرك اني ارى مصرعي ولكن اغذ اليه الخطى [202]

but is a profound yearning to fulfil a noble task:

ارى مقلتي دون حقي السليب ودون بلادي هو المبتغى [203]

This poem is still memorized by many Arabs.

However, not all of his poems are as good as this one. The committee which was set up to collect and edit his dīwān in 1956[204] resorted to a process of selection and omission in its choice of the poems of the collection.[205] These were collected from the various newspapers as well as from friends and relatives of the poet as there was no manuscript of his complete works. The failure to publish all of ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd's available poetry is regrettable as it denied to the literary historian as well as to the critic of poetry the chance to study the different levels of a creative talent hampered by a limited culture and a limited knowledge of modern poetic tools.[206] For ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Muḥmūd's creativity was hampered to a great extent by these factors, unlike Ṭūqān whose greater urbanity and wider education were great assets in determining the finer quality of his poetry. And whereas the above-mentioned poem by Maḥmūd is equal almost to the best in Ṭūqān, his uneven poetic contribution and the weakness of some of his poems account for his lesser fame and explain in part Ṭūqān's superior role in modern Arabic poetry in Palestine.

But with ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd the role of poetry, not only as a

mirror of contemporary life, but also as a direct engagement with its greater forces is established. Self dedication and the inevitability of sacrifice become an integral part of the poetic expression, and the tragedy of the outer world around the poet becomes his own personal tragedy and his own personal commitment. This is 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd's greatest achievement.[207]

Another poet who rose to fame in the thirties writing in the same line of realistic poetry was 'Abd al-Karīm al-Karmi, known as Abū Salma (1911). Abū Salma, although from Ṭulkarm, near Nablus, received his secondary education in Damascus,[208] then studied law at its university graduating in 1930.[209] He comes from a family who loved literature.[210] His own father, Sa'īd bin Manṣūr al-Karmi, an Azhar graduate[211] was a conventional poet but was also a scholar of note.[212] He was chosen to be a member of the Arab Academy of Language in Damascus, and later its vice-president.[213] He also had a large library which included many valuable books and manuscripts.[214]

Abū Salma must have benefited considerably from this cultural background. On the other hand, he must have been saved from too much involvement with conventional poetic attitudes by his higher education, his learning French and some English,[215] and his expatriation, later, from Palestine in 1948. In fact we see that in his later poetry, he became more similar to poets like the Damascene Anwar al-'Aṭṭār and the Lebanese Bisharah al-Khouri (al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr). His later poetry shows the intermediate stage through which Arabic poetry passed between Classicism and Romanticism. Abū Salma's poetry, from the beginning, showed a greater lyricism, and later on it acquired a deeper involvement with nature and a less direct poetic approach. It also showed in some of its examples a tendency, unknown in the clear and direct imagery of Ṭūqān's poetry for example, towards abstract images. In this Abū Salma also differs from al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr whose images are never hazy or beyond the visual capacity of the reader. His early poetry, written in the mid-thirties, when the Palestine rebellion took place, brought him immediate fame[216] and popularity. His verses were

powerful and strongly woven, with a flow of direct angry emotion that was very effective. Images were clear and sharp:

217

هل تشهـــــدون محاكم التفتيش في العصر الجديـــــد
قوموا اسمعوا في كل ناحيـة يصيـــح دم الشهيـــــــد
. . . . . .
قوموا انظروا "فرحان" فوق جبينـه اثر السجـــــــــود
يمشي الى حبل الشهادة صائمـــا مشي الاســـــــــود
سبعون عامـــــا في سبيل الله والحق التليـــــــد
. . . . . .
قوموا انظروا الاهلين بين الوعد عاعـــوا والوعيـــــــد
ما بين ملقى في السجون وبـــــين منفـي شريـــــــد
او بين ارملـة تولول او يتيم او فقيـــــــــــــد
. . . . . .
قومـــوا انظـروا الوطن الذبيح من الوريـد الى الوريـــد
تتزاحم الاجيـال داميـة الخطـى حـــول اللحـــــود

This is extremely poignant, with a vitality in the images and the emotion unequalled in his later poetry. Hundreds of Palestinians memorized those fiery verses and other poems of his.

In his later poetry, he tried to become more sophisticated. The direct aim of his poetry changed as fiery emotions were quenched by disaster and stagnation, despair and loneliness, which took hold of the refugees. He was in Damascus, one of the conservative centres of poetry, but it had, in the fifties, seen a few experiments in Romantic, Symbolic and other kinds of poetry. Abū Salma benefited from the Syrian and Lebanese experiments, and his poetry developed in both theme and imagery. However, the poetry of exile which he wrote after 1948 shows hardly any capacity to meet the tragic fact of this expatriation, the desperate rootlessness imposed upon him and his countrymen by forces of evil and aggression. These forces are able to inspire him with angry poetry, but he is unable to put his finger on the full tragic context of the disaster. When he writes angry poetry, to which he seems more suited, he brings to mind memories of his earlier virile poetry in the thirties. Addressing the refugees he attacks the Arab countries which let them down:

213

ايهـا النازحـون ..... ماذا لقيـتم غير دنيا الآلام والاتـــــراح
وحملتم ذل السؤال ثقيـــــــلا بعد تاريخ ثورة وكفـــــــاح
قل لمن يدعي المـــروءة اقصـــــر وامسح اليوم دمعة التمســـاح
قل لمـــن يدعي العروبـــة ما كنـــت عليهـــا الا يـــد السفـــــاح
اسد خـــادر عليهـــا ولا يسمع منـــك الاعـــداء غير نبـــــــاح

But when Abū Salma writes about his longing for his lost country, it does not differ from that of al-Mahjar poets whose voluntary expatriation also brought about in them a similar longing but one that was not impossible to realize. There is a sadness, a gentle wistfulness in this longing which shows the effects of traditional emotions in poetry and exposes a great error in the poet's sensibility, a lack of insight into the true agony of a very pitiful, very tragic situation:

219

يا فلسطـــــين ...وكيف الملتقـى ؟ هل ارى بعد النوى ا قدس ترب ؟
عبـق السؤدد في ذراتـــــــه واناشيد الهوى في كل شعـب
....
وارى قلبي علـــى شاطئهـــــا ناشرا احلامـه العـذراء قربـــي
وارى السمـراء تلهـو بالهـــــوى تهب النور لعيني كل صـــب

Abū Salma tried to introduce another theme, that of love, into his poetry of longing for his lost country. His love for woman mixes, rather artificially, with his love for country. The woman is often seen to be his countrywoman, but she has no real identity. She seems to be the same heroine of Classical poetry for whom the poet weeps over the remains of a deserted camp and a lost love. But now she is united to the poet by this common fate of exile from Paradise, an exile which the poet cannot bring to the depths of the tragedy that it is in reality:

220

سنلتقـي في الشعر لولاه لـــــم تشمّ عينـاك ولم تشفقـــــي
وفي النسيمات الـــتي شـــردت من ربوات القـــدس والجرمـق
سنلتقي ما فـــوق ارض الحمـــى فننشر من انفاسنا ما بقـــي
في الكرمل المحزون بعـد النـــوى على رمال الشاطـــئ الازرق

He uses images from nature, often the nature of his own country, to describe his beloved, employing for this a vocabulary noted for its delicacy and

exquisiteness,[221] but suffers from too much repetitiveness, perhaps. However, his images, as his poetry developed, lost focus and poignancy and became fragmented creations and rather affected choices of colour, perfume, rays of light, breeze, flowers and trees:

222

اين الشذا والحلـــم المزهـــر — اهكذا حبـك يا اسمـــر
اهكذا تذوى ازاهـيرنـــا — وكان منها المسك والعنـــبر
....
اشعارنا كانت توشي الدنـــى — والليل من اشواقنـا ،مقمـــر
نطير مـن نجـــم الى نجمـــة — يلفنا وشاحـك الاصفـــر
فمن شعاع الشمـــس اهدابـــه — تضيء ،من اشعاعه ،الاعصـــر
كيف الهوى يمضي كعمر النـــدى — وفي بلادى مرجه الاخضـــر

and this:

223

غدا على درب الهوى نلتقـــي — يا جارتي في موسم الزنبـــق
لولا هوانا لم يبـــح بالشـــذا — ولا غفا طيب على مفـــرق
سنلتقي في حلـم عاطـــر — في امل رحب المدى مطلـــق
على طريق الفجر من حولنـــا — تسرى النجوم الزهر فـــي زورق
لولا هوانا لم تنر فـــي الدجـــى — ولا السنـــى لاح من المشـــرق
على شعاع البدر لولا الهـــوى — ما رف في حلم الصبا الريـــق
على وشاح المرج مزهـــوة — اعطافه بالزهـــر المونـــق
لولا هوانا لم تخـــف الربـــى — والمرج لم يزهر ولـــم يعبـــق

One does not get a true lasting image from this complex description of abstract meeting places (the procession of lilies, the fragrant dream, the vast hope, the road of the dawn, etc.) and unimpressive suggestions (too often repeated in other contemporary poets of the Romantic and Symbolic schools) of the effect of their love's magic. One can therefore say that Abū Salma's poetry shows a richness of imagination without adding anything substantial to the development of image in modern Arabic poetry.

The mixing of love and patriotism added nothing to the warmth of emotion in his poetry. In fact it detracted from it, because, as with his poetry of longing, there is no depth in the love emotion he reveals,

but rather a fascination, rather immature, with woman's physical beauty. The involvement in the physical attributes of a woman is not camouflaged by the nobler images he employs to describe them. They remain naive attachments to the visual in a woman's beauty and fall below the nobler feelings of love and its profound experience. The theme remains on a lower level than that of either love or of the wandering Palestinian.

Footnotes

1. Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Asad, Al-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth fī Filasṭīn wa 'l-Urdun, pp.10-11.

2. See Al-Risālah No.151, 25th May, 1936, p.866, for a reference to this Bedouin poetry in an article by Jiryis al-Qusūs entitled "Al-Ḥayāt al-Adabiyyah fī Sharq al-Urdunn". Bedouin poetry, he says, might not be abundant, but it has living elements which make it different from the poetry written in Classical Arabic in Jordan and other Arab countries.

3. May I take the liberty here of mentioning that the Italian Arabist Sig. Maria Nallino remarked to me in Rome in 1952 or a little earlier that such were the qualities she saw in the Palestinian intelligensia.

4. Naẓīr Zaitūn in an essay entitled "Fi 'l-Adab al-Mahjari" remarked that Arabic literature in al-Mahjar was confined to the Syrians and Lebanese, for "among the Palestinian emigrants who were not less in number than the Syrians, no man of letters appeared. Is it not indeed strange that we do not see one man of letters from Palestine?", Al-Ma'rifah magazine, Damascus, June, 1964, I, iv, 89.

5. Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, p.109.

6. Maḥmūd Muṭlaq in his introduction to al-Tal's diwan, 'Ashiyyāt Wādi 'l-Yābis, Amman, 1954, p.6.

7. See Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, p.40, where he describes how young men in Palestine and Trans-Jordan used to go to secondary schools in Beirut, Damascus and other places for their secondary education.

8. Ibid., p.109.

9. Ibid., p.110; Muṭlaq, op.cit., p.7.

10. Asad, loc.cit.

11. See ibid., pp.110-1; Muṭlaq, op.cit., pp.7-12; 'Isa al-Nā'ūri says that al-Tal changed twenty-one jobs, "Muṣṭafa Wahbi 'l-Tal", al-Adīb magazine, June, 1946, p.46.

12. Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, p.111.

13. Muṭlaq, op.cit., p.12.

14. Ibid., Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, pp.110-1.

15. Ibid., p.111; Muṭlaq, op.cit., pp.12-3.

16. See ibid., pp.13-4.

17. Ibid., p.13.

18. Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, p.109 n.

19. See the preface to 'Ashiyyāt.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., p.71.

24. Ibid., p.81.

25. Ibid., p.97. See also similar examples on pp.63 and 64.

26. Ibid., p.76.

27. Ibid., p.81. See also pp.106, 89, 115 for similar mistakes.
28. Ibid., p.70.
29. Ibid., p.65.
30. Ibid., p.86.
31. Ibid., p.129.
32. Ibid., p.71.
33. Ibid., p.143.
34. Ibid.
35. See ibid., p.77, et passim.
36. Ibid., pp.77, 94, et passim.
37. Ibid., pp.79, 80, 90, 107, 139, et passim.
38. Ibid., pp.80, 94, 108, 111, 130, 139, 155, et passim.
39. Ibid., pp.86, 90, et passim.
40. Ibid., pp.89, 94, 109, 115, and its springs of "Rāḥūb", pp.121, 139, and its villages of al-Ṣarīḥ p.121 and Ḥiṣn,p p.121, 155, et passim.
41. Ibid., pp.89, 155, et passim.
42. Ibid., p.90, et passim.
43. Ibid., pp.109, 156, et passim.
44. Ibid., pp.126, 130, et passim.
45. Ibid., pp.94, 139, et passim.
46. Ibid., p.113; see also p.143.
47. Ibid., p.126.
48. Ibid., p.130.
49. Ibid., p.142.
50. Ibid., p.94.
51. Ibid., p.90.
52. Ibid., p.89.
53. Ibid., p.155.
54. Ibid., pp.110-111.
55. Ibid., p.89.
56. "ʿArār, Shāʿir al-Urdunn", Al-Adīb magazine, April, 1959, p.40.
57. Examples of poetry of occasion he wrote is his elegy on King Ḥusain, ʿAshiyyāt, pp.98-104.
58. See for example his poem "Sulṭān al-Aṭrash", ibid., p.128 and his poem "Nawarun Nusammīhum" pp.113- 5 in which he shows concern about Palestine; etc.
59. Ibid., p.87.
60. See ibid., pp.87, 88, 90, 113, 119, 129, et passim.
61. Ibid., p.63. Al-Habr is a nickname for a gypsy called Raṣāṣ who figures a great deal in al-Tal's poetry; see ʿAshiyyāt, p.23 for an explanation of the nickname; see p.25 for a picture of al-Habr.

62. Ibid., p.186.

63. Ibid., pp.186-7.

64. Ibid., p.187.

65. Ibid., p.42.

66. Ibid., p.26.

67. Ibid., p.27.

68. 'Isā al-Nā'ūrī, loc.cit.

69. 'Ashiyyāt, p.86.

70. Ibid., pp.94-5; Al-Umm is a religious book.

71. Ibid., p.113.

72. Ibid., p.76.

73. Ibid., p.86.

74. Ibid., p.129. See especially his poem dedicated to the description of 'Abbūd, ibid., pp.61-2.

75. Ibid., pp.110, 155, 169 and 175, etc. He is another Sheikh.

76. Ibid., p.80.

77. Ibid., pp.50-1; see also his poem, "Sakira 'l-Dahru", p.105.

78. Ibid., p.42. See also his poem "Akhū Ṭarabin", p.165. Nājī 'Allūsh, however, insists that al-Tal drank to forget. See "Al-Shi'r al-Urduni 'l-Ḥadīth" Al-Ādāb magazine, December 1955, p.37.

79. 'Ashiyyāt, pp.76-8.

80. Ibid., pp.77-'8

81. Ibid., p.129.

82. Ibid., p.157.

83. See 'Īsā al-Nā'ūri, "Muṣṭafā Wahbi 'l-Tal", p.45 where he calls him the poet of wine and gypsies.

84. He can also be regarded as a defender of 'al-ṣa'ālīk', whom he called his brethren; see his poem "Ikhwāni 'l-Ṣa'ālīk", ibid., pp.31-2.

85. 'Ashiyyāt, p.43.

86. Ibid.

87. Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filastīn, p.110.

88. Ibid.

89. 'Ashiyyāt, pp.68-9.

90. Compare this poem with his conventional poem on the death of King Ḥusain bin 'Ali, ibid., pp.98-104, many verses of which are extremely flat and banal platitudes; see especially p.98.

91. 'Ashiyyāt, pp.132-6. The second poem in free verse is "Yā Ḥulwata 'l-Naẓrah", pp.163-4.

92. Ibid., p.132.

93. Ibid., pp.134-5.

94. Ibid., p.133. It also appears on p.71.

95. Ibid.

96. Ibid., p.132. It also appears on p.70.

97. Nāji ʿAllūsh mentions it, rather hesitantly, loc.cit.

98. Asad, Al-Shiʿr fī Filasṭīn, p.89.

99. Ibid., n.

100. Ibid. See also T. Ẓubyān, Al-Malik ʿAbdullah Kamā ʿAraftuh , Amman, 1967, pp.72-4, where Emir ʿAbdullah employs tashṭīr with al-Mutanabbi's famous verses on the lion of Tiberius, completely diluting the fine poem. See also an example of his muʿāraḍāt with other poets, ibid., pp.75-7.

101. Asad, Al-Shiʿr fī Filasṭīn, p.90.

102. Ibid., p.91.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid.

105. See Ẓubyān, op.cit., pp.79, 81, 32, 83, 85-6, 87, et passim.

106. Asad, Al-Shiʿr fī Filasṭīn, pp.83-9.

107. See his correspondence with al-Tal in ʿAshiyyāt, pp.173-4; see also Asad, Al-Shiʿr fī Filasṭīn, pp.93-5; Ẓubyān, op.cit., pp.101-2 et passim.

108. See what Asad wrote about him in Al-Shiʿr fī Filasṭīn, pp.76-80.

109. No.151, May 25th, 1936, pp.865-7.

110. Ibid., p.865.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid., p.866.

114. Asad, Al-Shiʿr fī Filasṭīn, p.139.

115. Zakī al-Maḥāsini, Shāʿir Filasṭīn, Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān fī Ḥayātihi wa Shiʿrih , /a new edition/, Cairo, n.d., pp.6-7; ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Sharārah, Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān, Beirut, 1964, pp.8-9.

116. Maḥāsini, op.cit., pp.15-16; Sharārah, op.cit., p.9.

117. Asad, Al-Shiʿr fī Filasṭīn, p.41, quoting Muḥammad Rafīq al-Tamīmi, in Wilāyat Beirut, al-Qism al-Janūbi, Beirut, 1335 A.H.

118. Ibid., pp.41-2.

119. ʿU. Farrūkh, Shāʿirān Muʿāṣirān, Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān wa Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbi, Beirut, 1954, pp.15-16.

120. Al-Maḥāsini, op.cit., p.11.

121. Ibid., pp.12-13. See also Al-Badawi al-Mulaththam, Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān fī Wataniyyātihi wa Wujdaniyyātih , Beirut, 1964, p.20; Farrūkh, op.cit., p.16.

122. Al-Maḥāsini, loc.cit.; Asad, Al-Shiʿr fī Filasṭīn, p.144, Farrūkh, op.cit., p.72.

123. Ibid., p.18, and other references.

124. Al-Mulaththam, op.cit., pp.18-19; al-Maḥāsini, op.cit., pp.20-21.

125. Ibid., p.20; see also Asad, Al-Shiʿr fī Filasṭīn, p.139.

126. Ibid., p.144; Maḥāsini, op.cit., p.21; etc.

127. Al-Mulaththam, op.cit., p.20; al-Maḥāsini, op.cit., p.22; Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, p.145. These writers seem to stress the influence of this educator; Farrūkh, however, says that Ṭūqān knew him only slightly, op.cit., p.18; despite Farrūkh's inner knowledge of Ṭūqān, one tends to believe, rather, that Zuraiq might have had a relatively good influence on the growing poet, for Palestine was rather poor in literary circles at the time and literary minded educators like Zuraiq would be very popular with a young aspirant like Ṭūqān.

128. For more on Zuraiq's influence (which also shows at the same time the aridity of the literary environment in Palestine at the time) see Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, pp.145-6; Maḥāsini, op.cit., pp.21-2; see also a poem in praise of Zuraiq by al-Raṣāfi, probably written in the early twenties during the time when al-Raṣāfi was living at Jerusalem, Dīwān al-Raṣāfi, pp.146-7.

129. Farrūkh, op.cit., p.19; Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, p.144.

130. Farrūkh, op.cit., p.28, 71 et passim. Maḥāsini, however, mentions that Ṭūqān studied with Jabr Ḍūmiṭ, the grammarian, op.cit., p.23, but this is contradicted by Farrūkh's denial of this, op.cit., p.138. However, Ṭūqān seems to have held Ḍūmiṭ in his great esteem; see his elegy on him in Dīwān Ibrāhīm, second edition, Beirut, 1966, pp.191-8.

131. Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, p.146.

132. Ibid., pp.147-8; Maḥāsini, op.cit., p.26.

133. Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, p.147, Farrukh, op.cit., p.30, et passim.

134. See ibid., pp.83-97; Maḥāsini, op.cit., pp.23-4; Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, pp.147 and 148.

135. Dīwān Ibrāhīm, pp.138-9.

136. See Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, pp.140, 141, 143; Farrūkh, op.cit., pp.19-27.

137. Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, p.142; see also his famous poem "Al-Sha'ir al-Mu'allim", Dīwān Ibrāhīm, pp.169-171.

138. For an account on this see Maḥāsini, op.cit., pp.32-46; Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, pp.141-3; Farrūkh, op.cit., pp.35-51, 54-8.

139. Al-Mulaththam, op.cit., p.51. This poem is not published in his diwān.

140. Ibid., p.50. See also ibid., pp.53-4 for the answer of Emir Shakīb Arslān to the poet with regard to the attitude of Egyptian men of letters, now hesitantly felt by many Arab poets and writers to be one of neglect to literature written outside Egypt.

141. For a single example see his verse on p.111 of Dīwān Ibrāhīm:

تبارك هذا الوجه ما اوضح العنى وما اطيب الفقر والمتورد

which is reminiscent of the famous verse by 'Abdullah Ibn al-Ṣimmah al-Qushairi:

بنفسي تلك الارض ما اطيب الربى وما احسن المصطاف والمتربعا

142. See ibid., p.95 for his poem "Fi 'l-Maktabah" where he says:

وسقاه في الفردوس مختوم الرحيق وركبه

and this:

فاذا بها طلك تنزّل للقلوب المتعبة

143. Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filastīn, p.144.

144. Dīwān Ibrāhīm, p.77.

145. Ibid., pp.86-7.

146. Ibid., p.37.

147. See for example his poems "Al-Shahīd", ibid., pp.5-7; "Al-Thulāthā' al-Ḥamrā'", ibid., pp.8-19; and "Al-Fidā'ī", ibid., pp.47-9.

148. See his many poems on these matters. Examples are "Ilā Bā'i'ī 'l-Bilād", ibid., pp.26-8; "Yā Rijāl al-Bilād", ibid., pp.32-5; "Filastīn Mahd al-Shaqā'", ibid., pp.36-9; "Al-Quds", ibid., pp.67-8; etc.

149. Ibid., p.5.

150. Ibid., p.48.

151. Ibid., p.5.

152. Ibid., p.69.

153. Ibid., p.33.

154. Ibid., p.39.

155. Ibid., p.79.

156. Ibid., p.59.

157. Ibid., p.5.

158. Ibid., pp.47-9.

159. Ibid., p.73.

160. Ibid., p.34.

161. Ibid., p.30.

162. Ibid., p.96.

163. Ibid., pp.108-9.

164. On his realistic attitude, see also Sharārah, op.cit., pp.43, 50.

165. Dīwān Ibrāhīm, pp.94-6; see especially p.96.

166. Ibid., p.110.

167. Ibid.

168. These were mostly elegies, e.g. pp.183, 203-6, 222-3, 224, 225-8. His other elegies, however, were of a more authentic nature.

169. Ibid., pp.162-4.

170. Ibid., p.162.

171. Ibid., pp.163-4.

172. Ibid., pp.213-221.

173. Ibid., p.183. See also p.226.

174. Ibid., p.191. "Ghamdān" is the dead man's palace.

175. Ibid., p.194.

176. Ibid., p.226.

177. Ibid., p.206.

178. Ibid., p.195.

179. Ibid., p.183; see also p.209 of his elegy on ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Kāẓimi, and p.215 of his elegy on King Faisal I.

180. For a discussion on this see an article by Yūsuf Ḥusain Bakkār entitled "Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān wa Athar al-Maraḍ fī Ḥayātih ", Al-Aqlām, March 1967, pp.122-3.

181. Dīwān Ibrāhīm, pp.140-1.

182. Ibid., p.140.

183. Ibid., p.122.

184. Ibid., p.123.

185. Ibid., p.115.

186. Ibid., pp.229-238.

187. Ibid., pp.3-19.

188. Ibid., pp.8-9.

189. For a discussion of simplicity of style as a prerequisite of passionate moments in poetry see the excellent discussion by George H.W. Rylands in his book Words and Poetry, second impression, London, 1928, pp.26-8 and 37-3.

190. Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā, Al-Rihlah al-Thāminah, Sidon-Beirut, 1967,p.39, Abū Salma (ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Karmi), "Al-Adab fī Filasṭīn", Muḥādarāt al-Mausim al-Thaqāfi 1961-1962, Damascus, 1963, V, 227.

191. Asad, Al-Shiʿr fī Filasṭīn, p.172.

192. Jabrā, op.cit., p.42.

193. Ibid., p.43.

194. Asad, Al-Shiʿr fī Filasṭīn, p.171.

195. Jabrā, op.cit., p.42.

196. Abū Salma, "Al-Adab fī Filasṭīn", p.228.

197. Asad, loc.cit.

198. Ibid; Jabrā, loc.cit.

199. Ibid.

200. Ibid.

201. Asad, Al-Shiʿr fī Filasṭīn, p.174.

202. Ibid.

203. Ibid.

204. Asad, Al-Shiʿr fī Filasṭīn, p.172.

205. Ibid. The collection entitled Dīwān ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd was published in Amman, 1958.

206. Asad, ibid., p.173, discusses this, but comments rather hesitantly and apologetically on it.

207. See what Nāji ʿAllūsh says concerning this. Comparing him with Ṭūqān, he finds him more authentic and calls Ṭūqān, unfairly, an exhibitionist and a bourgeois; "Al-Shiʿr al-Urduni 'l-Ḥadīth", p.39.

208. Al-Shiʿr fī Filastīn, p.216. However, Asad states that the poet was born in Damascus, whereas Abū Salma was born in Tulkarm. The information was obtained from his brother, Ḥasan al-Karmi, on April 27th, 1968, at London.

209. The same interview.

210. Asad, loc.cit.

211. Ibid, p.19.

212. Ibid, pp.19 and 20.

213. Ibid., p.19.

214. Ibid.

215. The same interview.

216. Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filastīn, p.103.

217. Ibid., pp.104-105.

218. His diwan, Al-Musharrad , Damascus, 1963, p.23. (First edition was published in 1953.)

219. Ibid., pp.6-7.

220. Ughniyāt Biladi, Damascus, 1959, p.27.

221. Asad, Al-Shi'r fī Filastīn, p.220 has a list of them.

222. Al-Musharrad, pp.48-49.

223. Ughniyāt Biladi, pp.25-26.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ROMANTIC CURRENT IN MODERN ARABIC POETRY

It has been established so far that the forces of change had long been at work in modern Arabic poetry which was struggling simultaneously in several different spheres. There was, moreover, the critical sphere which was being constantly enriched with new experience. Ever since the second decade a Romantic current had been slowly gathering strength in the Arab East after having established itself fully in the work of Gibrān and other Mahjar Romantics. By the end of the third decade several Romantic poets rose to fame in the Arab world the greatest number of whom were from Egypt. But before attempting to deal with the Romantic output of any one Arab country a general glimpse of the Arabic Romantic poetry in general is essential.

1. Arab Romanticism came into being with the rise of Arab nationalism, but was not identical with it. For although the rise of the two movements was caused by the awakening of men to their unhappy surroundings and to the disparity between acquired ideals and the realities of life, their development did not take the same course. On the one hand, Arab Romanticism in al-Mahjar quickly took on a universal aspect and compared, in its modern idealizations, the real world of man with the desired world of the Forest and primitive life. It is not impossible to argue here that the Mahjar poets were comparing, perhaps unconsciously, life of civilised Western man in an industrial society with that of the Lebanese or Syrian peasant, rejecting the former and glorifying the latter. This argument, however, does not lack counter-arguments that might defeat it, as for example Gibrān's contempt for the fossilized traditions of Lebanese peasantry and his repudiation of outworn concepts of country life in the Lebanon. But even without this, the argument is unable to stand on its

own as this theme is not explicitly conveyed by the wording of these poems which speak rather about the general ideals of human life without any direct applications to life in the Middle Eastern countryside.

On the other hand Romanticism in Egypt was mostly introverted, individualistic, negative or pleasure-seeking, and had no direct bearing on national questions as such. The Romantic nationalistic theme that predominates Arabic poetry in this century is the glorification in poetry of past national greatness and of the national hero, past and present. But this glorification has always been present in all the neo-Classical poetry and is not a particular attribute of the Romantic poetic expression. Rather can it boast of a far greater affinity with the traditionalists.

In fact Arab nationalism tended, in the long run, to suppress some aspects of the Arab Romantic movement in poetry in favour of a more factual approach. A study of the development of poetry in the forties will reveal this subtle, rather instinctive effort to bring poetry into the grip of the actuality of Arab life. Indeed it was to be the search by the Arab man for a solution to national disaster that would bring about the counter-movement of neo-Realism which carried in its expressed statements a sort of 'contempt' for Romantic yearnings and the Romantic poetic method.

2. Romantic Arabic literature in modern times had a very short period of preparation of about ten years, which constituted the first decade of this century. In this decade the mild Romantic efforts of both Mutrān and al-Rīḥāni, as well as Gibrān's interesting early Romanticism began to be felt. Gibrān, in fact, seems to have mushroomed as a full Romantic, a great step from his immediate predecessors who had but a slight connection with Biblical Romanticism. Moreover, it is clear that the Romantic prose of al-Manfalūṭi in the second decade stems, not from a Romantic tradition in prose, but from a decisive change in the spirit of the age which al-Manfalūṭi seemed to absorb, reflect in his works and direct towards greater Romanticism.

3. The Romantic movement in Arabic literature happened without the backing of a philosophy (except in the case of Gibrān who developed his own philosophy based in part on Western concepts), and certainly without anything similar to the French revolution. It lacked an indigenous basis of thought similar to the European foundation of thought and ideals that underlay the European Romantic experiment. Moreover, the Romantic movement in Arabic did not formulate its own principles after its growth. It never acquired a poetic creed with defined principles which the poets should try to follow.[1] It simply happened. Especially in Egypt, it is perhaps one of the simplest Romantic movements in the history of any poetry.

4. The Romantic movement in Arabic poetry seems to have directed itself fully, right from the beginning, towards the destruction of the neo-Classical school of poetry. In fact the first theories it professed in Egypt dealt with two things: that poetry should be the expression of the inner self, and that poetry had no further use for the neo-Classical school. Its direct and conscious concern was, therefore, an artistic one. Before anything else, it was an answer to the forces within the poetic art itself which strove for a change in form, attitude and content. This major motive for Arab Romanticism is hardly mentioned by writers on the subject in Arabic.

5. The psychological, social and political causes for Arab Romanticism are well recognised as a driving force behind the Romantic movement in Arabic literature.[2] An analogy is sometimes drawn between the development of Romanticism in Arabic poetry in Egypt and its development in French or English nineteenth century poetry.[3] However, the political causes given by writers like al-Ma'addāwi and Maḥmūd Amīn al-'Ālim seem exaggerated if one considers firstly the short history of the political process in this century prior to the rise of the Romantic current and secondly the apparent lack of political consciousness in some of the more famous Egyptian Romantics such as Naji, al-Ḥamshari, Maḥmūd Ḥasan Ismā'īl and 'Ali Maḥmūd

Ṭāhā in his earlier and Romantic period. The truth of the disappointment in the outcome of the 1919 revolution in Egypt, in the general failure of the popular strife, in the usurpation of freedoms* must be measured against the general awakening of the poets to these evils and their true involvement in a well-defined conflict against tyranny - a mode of political life not altogether new to the Middle East at that time. Even Abū Shādi who embodied far greater ideals than any of his contemporary Egyptian poets[4] and whose culture and vision were far wider and less subjective than the rest, did not reflect in the poetry he wrote during the twenties and thirties a truly anguished rebellion against the 'lost' liberty under a despotic king and a tyrannical prime minister, Ṣidqi, who is often given credit for having helped, through his tyranny, to give rise to the Romantic current in Egyptian poetry.[5] This explanation, moreover, neglects the fact that Romanticism in Egyptian literature had started earlier in the second decade with al-Manfalūṭi's prose contribution and the call for the poets to write about inner experience. It does not explain, moreover, the rise of Romanticism at the same time in both Tunisia and Lebanon with Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbi and Ilyās Abū Shabakah taking the lead in these two countries. Nor does this explanation attempt to link the rise of Romanticism in Egypt with the earlier Romanticism of al-Mahjar. A close study of the varying currents blowing over Arab life will reveal that Romanticism must have been a reaction to a general change of mood in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world. It will also reveal that it was not

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* Ismā'īl Mazhar, writing in 1926, says on this : "How often do we hear from those who cannot contemplate the causes and results of things, that the Arabist revolution was the beginning of a modern intellectual revival, and that the 1919 revolution...was the climax of a great development in ideas not only in the sphere of politics, but also in the sphere of science and economics. But...one look at the Arabist revolution is enough to prove to us that that revolution, like the 1919 one, did not touch the inner life of the people at all, but merely the outer life, and with fast vanishing effects.... The basis on which the inner life depends, in the very depths of the people's consciousness,"[6] was not touched by these two revolutions.

political failure, in particular, that had prompted this change of mood. Earlier political catastrophes did not result in a Romantic movement in literature. The failure of the Arabist revolution led, if at all, to a confirmation of the Classical current in poetry. The disappointment in the Ottoman Covenant of 1808 all over the Arab world did not particularly help to release the Romantic current in poetry, nor did the miseries of the First World War in Syria and Lebanon. After the war, there followed the discovery of the Sykes-Picot treaty which resulted in the establishment of the British and French mandates in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, then the discovery of the Zionist plot and the beginning of Jewish immigration into Palestine, the British intervention in home rule in Iraq, etc. Yet none of these gave rise to a true Romantic current in poetry in these countries despite the fact that the whole Arab world during the third decade was shaken to its foundations with failed political strife and disillusioned national hopes. One can cite many more examples such as the Syrian revolt of 1925 which ended in chaos and "martyrs", and the several rebellions in Iraq and Palestine. In fact a close scrutiny of the relationship of poetry to political strife will reveal that wherever political strife was constantly present, as was the case in Palestine, for example, a factual realistic trend showed itself in poetry. And indeed in Egypt, the involvement of poetry with national and pan-Arab political struggle was best expressed by the neo-Classical poets among whom Shauqi is the most outstanding. Even later on in the forties we see a Romantic poet, ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā, turn to more Classical methods when writing nationalistic poetry.

Again since there was a deep political disillusionment all over the Arab world, one must expect the same reactions to take place in poetry in each of the Arab countries, if literature were so immediately and intimately connected with changes in the political scene. But modern Arabic literature

and especially poetry has not been so closely connected, as it might seem, with political changes. A close study of the Romantic movement as a whole will reveal that Romanticism took hold of poetry in any particular Arab country whenever an enlightened awakening to cultural and social conditions became acute. First there were the Arab poets in North America. The disparity between the life they knew in the Arab world and the progress they saw in American life was so great that their rebellion had very wide dimensions. Fortunately they were able to share in the freedom which they discovered existed there. They achieved a personal freedom denied to them at home, a fact which liberated them to a considerable extent, and they could therefore direct their energy to the outside world and to more universal aspects. This is why their Romanticism was healthier and more positive.

The awakening to the same kind of disparity began to take hold on the educated young Egyptians at the end of the first decade but reached its full sway in the third and fourth decades of this century. Shauqi's generation had been able, to use the words of R.A. Foakes, "to assume as their frame of reference a concept of an ordered and stable universe."[7] To them, "actions, ideas, relationships of characters, were inevitably posed against an ordering of the world."[8] It was an ordering which "established their value and distinguished clearly between right and wrong, good and bad."[9] The analogy here is being drawn between the English Augustans of whom Foakes is speaking, and the neo-Classical Arab poets. It can be further continued in the words of Allan Rodway who says that "Augustan poetry, broadly speaking, is conformist."[10] The neo-Classical poetry is conformist too, for its poets, again in Rodway's words, "felt at one with the fundamental values of their age."[11] A complacency, an urbanity, a spirit of compromise and acceptance are qualities that characterise their poetry. Their rebellion was directed towards external

elements and not towards their own society.* Their conception of life in their own society was that what is, is right, and need have no change. It is relevant and significant that pre-Romantic poetry sometimes tells a story (witness Muṭrān's narratives and Shauqi's plays, to name but a few) or, again using the words of Foakes, at least says what it has to say in terms of a world, events and people outside the author himself.[12]

This was the ideal order of Shauqi's world, but by the end of the first decade the disparity between the "ideal order" and the world which the young educated generation was slowly discovering outside their own life had become great. But unlike the energy in Europe at the end of the 18th century which was based on well developed European ideals of a new life,[13] and which led to Western Romanticism, there was a sort of anarchic existence that disrupted the old faith in the traditional life, distorted its dimensions and dislocated a good part of its facets without supplying the bewildered generation with a new frame of existence. The result was sometimes a groping for any new ideals that presented themselves, a groping often devoid of critical discrimination. The Egyptian youth of the twenties and thirties had discovered a great impotency in their emotional life, which seemed to enslave their energy and turn them into mooning introverts. A deep inner thirst for emotional freedom had become apparent in literature since the second decade. The discovery of Western life by this generation had shaken the fundamentalist way of life which Shauqi's generation adopted. Shauqi had visited France and had lived in Spain but returned home unperturbed. Shukri and Aḥmad Zaki Abū Shādi studied in England and returned home wanting to change the world. But the orthodox world in which they lived showed a resistence which led Shukri to the writing of his original confessions, I'tirāfāt, in violent criticism of what he saw to be the sterility of life around him. The same negative forces led to the deep

* The criticism of poets like Ḥafiẓ and al-Raṣāfi was not a true rebellion against social status of the poor, but rather a call to the rich and mighty to help them, i.e. an acceptance of the social order in its basic form.

despondency of Abū Shādi and his final emigration from Egypt to the New World. These forces were also the cause which turned the other Apollo poets into introvert Romantics, sometimes with marked decadent streaks of Masochism and Sensationalism.

This must be clearly seen if Romanticism in Arabic is to be correctly understood.

Al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr's semi-Romanticism was appropriate in Lebanon in the second decade. For strictly personal and cultural reasons (his very Classical education, for example), he could not yield to more Romanticism than this. Lebanon's true Romantics in the early century were its emigrants in North America. When consciousness grew among the people and the Romantic wave released in al-Mahjar reached home, together with the effect of al-Manfalūṭi's much read works, the thirties had already arrived. It was at the hands of a powerful poet, the famous Ilyās Abū Shabakah, that Romanticism in Lebanon developed.

In Tunisia, the association of Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbi with the Apollo Group was motivated greatly by the avant-garde position which al-Shābbi's poetry took. He is the only North African poet of modern times to play a role in the development of Arabic poetry as a whole or to enter the stream of the avant-garde movement in modern poetry. Not only the social and political conditions in Tunisia prompted the Romantic trend his poetry took, but also his own enlightened outlook, and his own personal tragedy. This will be discussed in greater length in the section on him.

In Iraq Romanticism arrived quite late, at the end of the forties. This accompanied a belated awakening of the social and cultural consciousness in the country. Its belated arrival gave it only a very short life span as a fast growing consciousness of life and art took hold of some of the most gifted poets to appear in the Arab world in modern times. A quick if not thorough change to a more realistic outlook took place in Iraq at the beginning of the fifties.

In Palestine, however, the daily political struggle with an active and continuous physical aggression gave alertness and a deep public consciousness to the period. Only one poet, Muṭlaq ʿAbd al-Khāliq, diverted to decadent Romanticism with a lust for utter self-annihilation. His, as will be discussed shortly, was an experiment which deviated from the general course of a public-conscious poetry about him.

It is poetry in Syria, however, which furnishes us with a stark example of resistance to Romanticism. Syrian poets on the whole seemed to remain hardly affected by the wave of Romanticism which had spread over Egypt and Lebanon. They had, of course, their Romantic poets among whom Anwar al-ʿAṭṭār, above mentioned, was a mild example. Although the poetry of poets like Nadīm Muḥammad and ʿUmar al-Nuṣṣ was authentically Romantic it did not dominate the scene. Furthermore it had arrived rather belatedly and the Romantic element never became a real wave in Syrian literature and never took hold of the most important poetic expression there. This resistance seems, at first glance, unwarranted, in view of the similarity of the conditions experienced by Syria, Egypt and Lebanon. But it could be partly explained by the difference in the cultural atmosphere between these countries. The conservative Kurd ʿAli school in Syria, under the guiding spirit of the revivalist Kurd ʿAli, had formed itself around the Arab Academy of language and its magazine, both of which were characterized by conservative affinities. This school left a deep impact on the literary expression of the period. Moreover, Damascus regarded itself as the citadel of Arab nationalism which had always aligned itself with the literary and cultural heritage and with the preservation of the Classical language.

However, although belated, the Romanticism which a poet like Nadīm Muḥammad professed, stemmed from causes similar to the causes discussed above. In his introduction to his second diwan, Farāshāt wa ʿAnākib, he says that after returning from four years of study in France and

Switzerland, he faced the "stark and blatant clash between the Eastern and Western mentalities."[14] He describes this clash as being between the attitudes of the two mentalities to love and woman, between the emotional freedom in the West and the repressive attitudes in the Arab world, especially in Arab provincial life.[15] The result of this latter attitude was that he experienced extreme repression and did not find an outlet except in drink and poetry.[16] His poetry was one of pain and suffering.[17]

Naturally there were other reasons for this, too. The general moral and political squalor are of particular note but, and this is extremely important, they are effective firstly because they intrude upon and destroy the moral ideals the poet has in mind, and secondly because they encroach on his personal well-being, hindering his progress (he complains that the recognition which he desired has been denied to him),[18] and saddening his life (he mentions the death of his brother as a result of politics).[19] This shows that he, together with other Romantic poets such as Abū Shādi (and al-Shābbi to some degree) were conscious of political repressions as well as of evils of national life in general, as a result of the dark shadows which they threw on the life of the poets themselves. The subjective element is highly present here.

6. As for ethnical causes for Arab Romanticism, this is a complete study in itself due to the need of a vast comparative analysis. However, the suggestion does arise that a latent Romantic element, the nostalgia, prevails traditionally in the Arab psyche, transmitted from one generation to another in poetry, habits, folk-singing, etc.[20] But this must remain on the level of a suggestion in this work.

7. Because of the lack of real substance and philosophy behind it, Romanticism in Arabic literature contained from the outset certain decadent streaks. If al-Rīḥāni and Muṭrān, (both with only limited Romantic streaks) together with Gibrān showed a healthy Romanticism, al-Manfalūṭi's version was but a suppressed emotionalism in need of catharsis through

tragedy. Death, parting, fatal illnesses, poverty and frustrated noble endeavours are constant themes in his works. The later Egyptian Romantics, with the exception of Abū Shādi, were self-seekers who either introvertedly sought their own sad, little world of solitude, communion with nature and sorrows, or were open hearted extroverts who idealised wine, women and song. The Iraqi Romantics also had their share of decadence, for many among them were escapists and masochists.

8. Arab Romanticism, which reached its fullest sway in the thirties and forties of this century, seems to be, geographically and culturally, an isolated movement in the context of a Middle Eastern framework. It is a remarkable phenomenon that after the departure of the Ottomans from the Arab world at the close of the first World War, cultural and artistic links were immediately severed. The last we hear of any effect of Turkish cultural activity on poets in the Arab world prior to the fifties is the influence on al-Raṣāfi and al-Zahāwi of European ideals of freedom prevalent in Turkey just before the first World War. The work of the Egyptianised Turkish critic Isma'il Edham in the thirties of this century in Egypt, reflects more his Western education than any direct Turkish affinities. As for Persia, aside from the several translations of al-Khayyam's rubā'iyyāt, some of which were made direct from the English translations,[21] there seem to be no important links with contemporary poetry in Persia at the period. Indeed if any Romantic movement in the poetry of the Persians and Turks was taking place contemporaneously with the Arabic movement, it did so separately. There is no similarity here with the general sweep of Romanticism over Europe in the late eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries, and its envelopment of the whole European culture. The Arab world, having no actual literary intercourse with countries with which it shared some basic cultural concepts and values, and looking to the West for those cultural links, must have suffered an

embarrassing cultural situation. Any such links with the West at the time had twofold difficulties : the difficulty of basic cultural differences and conflicting attitudes towards Western culture, and the feelings of inferiority with which the learners were often approaching their Western models.

FOOTNOTES

1. M. Mandūr, Al-Shi'r al-Miṣri, III, 4, stresses this most emphatically. However, he overlooks the fact that Arab Romanticism was very short-lived, being quickly superseded by other poetic trends.
2. See, for example, M.A. al-'Ālim, Al-Ādāb magazine, January, 1955, pp.16-17; and Anwar al-Ma'addāwi, 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāha, pp.4-11 and 22.
3. See ibid., pp.4-11.
4. See al-'Ālim, op.cit., p.17.
5. See, for example, Mandūr, Al-Shi'r, III, 5; K. Nash'at, Abū Shādi wa Ḥarakat al-Tajdīd fī 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth, Cairo, 1967, pp. 348 and 414.
6. Tārīkh al-Fikr al-'Arabi, Beirut, n.d. p.113. (It had been first published in 1938).
7. The Romantic Assertion, London, 1958, p.39.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. The Romantic Conflict, London, 1963, p.15.
11. Ibid., p.16.
12. Op.cit., p.40.
13. See Foakes, op.cit., p.41.
14. Beirut, 1955, pp. 7-8.
15. Ibid., pp. 8 and 10.
16. Ibid., p.9.
17. Ibid., pp.9-11.
18. Ibid., p.9.
19. Ibid., pp.10-11.
20. See what Ṭāhā Ḥusain says about this point in Ḥadīth al-Arbi'ā', Cairo, 1945, III, 203-4.
21. Several translations of al-Khayyām's Rubā'iyyāt exist in Arabic. The earliest two, that of Wadī' al-Bustāni (Cairo, 1912) and that of Muḥammad al-Sibā'i (Cairo, 1923) were made from Western translations, the first from English and French and the second from Fitzgerald's translation. It was the third translation of the Rubā'iyyāt, that of Aḥmad Rāmi (Cairo, 1924), which was the first translation to be made directly from Persian. Other translations of the Rubā'iyyāt directly from Persian followed, among which the translation of Aḥmad al-Ṣāfi al-Najafi of 351 quartets is outstanding. 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Fāḍil translated 377 quartets from Persian and wrote a long study of the Rubā'iyyāt in his book Thaurat al-Khayyām, Cairo, 1951. The latest translation we have from Persian is Ibrāhīm al-'Urayyiḍ's version of the Rubā'iyyāt, (Beirut, 1966). Other translations also exist, some of them in prose.

SECTION 1: THE APOLLO GROUP IN EGYPT

The problem which confronts the critic of this particular period in Egypt is the comparatively great amount of material produced in Egypt on this subject by non-professional critics. Certain concepts about which one feels inclined to differ, such as those of the poetic excellence of al-ʿAqqād and Aḥmad Zaki Abū Shādi, were propagated. One therefore finds oneself obliged to contradict and to question very carefully what so many other writers have taken to be an established truth.

The difficulty is enhanced by the fact that Arabic poetry in Egypt, when treated by Egyptian literary historians, is often studied in isolation and very little attention is given to the contemporary poetic activity in the rest of the Arab world.[1] This attitude has precluded the possibility of comparison with other contemporary fields and therefore of making a competent and more sober aesthetic assessment of this poetry. It also ignored the influence of other Arab poets on poetry in Egypt. The apparent neglect by many writers in Egypt previous to the fifties to study the various contemporary trends of poetry in the Arab world has also limited their field of knowledge about these trends and their origin in modern Arabic poetry. It is true that the Arab world during this period looked to Egypt for literary leadership. But, aside from the influence of Shauqi and other neo-Classical poets in Egypt, the influence of the literary contribution in Egypt until the mid-thirties was more through the prose works and general cultural activity than through poetry. The experimental side of poetry in the Arab world was influenced more by al-Mahjar contribution. Indeed the more prominent poets of the Arab world already studied in this work show either the influence of their own poetic and cultural traditions modernised by their own creativity (as in the case of Aḥmad al-Ṣāfi al-Najafi and al-Jawāhiri), or the influence of

either al-Mahjar contribution or of Western literary sources (as in the case of Abū Rīshah and al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr). Before the mid-thirties the avant-garde poetic activity in Egypt influenced that of the Arab world by force of the heated controversy that took place and the great amount of writing done on poetic theory. Aside from the books on the subject, such as al-ʿAqqād's and al-Māzini's several collections of essays, the critical theory was published in the several magazines current in Egypt at the time, like Al-Risālah, Apollo, Al-Muqtaṭaf and Al-Hilāl, etc. However, the most important magazine to appear in Egypt in this respect was the Apollo magazine (1932-4) which was completely dedicated to poetry. A group spirit of a rather Romantic nature developed around this magazine which became a force by itself. But there was no single avant-garde poet in Egypt at the time who was able to exert as much influence as Shauqi had done. Al-Dīwān group and Abū Shādi, who filled the literary world in Egypt with their theorizations on poetry and their attacks on the neo-Classical school, were unable to support their arguments with superior examples from their own poetry. The presentation of less superior poetic examples as paragons of excellence and modernity must have thrown the aesthetic standards of the reading public in Egypt into some sort of chaos; for it was, just like the reading public in the rest of the Arab world, naive and unsure of its own judgment. Had there been more contact with the poetic activity in other Arab countries, the exchange of ideas would perhaps have helped to put certain applied judgments in their true perspective.

The poetic figure who rose to fame in the twenties and thirties in Egypt was that of Aḥmad Zaki Abū Shādi (1892-1955). He is regarded as a pioneer and a great innovator in modern Arabic poetry.[2] Looked at in perspective, Abū Shādi's contribution to the development of modern Arabic poetry in Egypt was great and valuable. Recent writers in Egypt have tried to re-assess his role and to give him his place in the story of this

development. The most important of these writers are ʿAbd al-Munʿim al-Khafājī, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dusūqī and Kamāl Nashʾat in their above-mentioned books, and M. Mandūr.[3] Mandūr and Nashʾat have applied some sound critical concepts to their study of his poetry and have therefore been able to detect, to a large extent, the many faults with which his poetry was afflicted.[4] ʿA. al-Dusūqī and ʿA. Khafājī, on the other hand, gave him a higher poetic value than he really achieved.

During his life time Abū Shādi's poetic contribution was the object of both praise[5] and violent attack.[6] To counteract the critical onslaught on him he found it necessary to write lengthy introductions to several of his diwans in which he explained his ideas on poetry and defended his poetic methods. To these were added many articles by his critic friends, mostly in praise of his poetry. However, the halo of greatness with which his poetry was invested was out of proportion with his true merit as a poet. His lack of real creative achievement was proved, during his life-time, by the fact that he was relatively unknown as a poet of note in the Arab world outside Egypt,[7] although the Arab world was at that time, i.e. in the twenties, thirties and forties, most eager to draw from the well of the Egyptian literary contribution.

However, Abū Shādı's service to Arabic poetry in Egypt was considerable if his critical writings on poetry, his spirit and his general activity in the field were considered.

Abū Shādı came from a distinguished family. His mother may have been a poet[8] and his father was a poet and a dilettante[9] in whose weekly literary salon[10] prominent poets like Muṭrān and Ḥāfiẓ as well as other prominent men of letters gathered.[11] The young Abū Shādi grew up to love literature and poetry. He did his secondary schooling at al-Tawfīqiyyah school between 1905-9.[12] This school was directed by an Englishman[13] and taught all subjects in English with the exception of the Arabic language which was taught by two Sheikhs.[14] After graduating from this

school, Abū Shādi spent a year at the Egyptian medical college[15] but emotional troubles at home forced him to go abroad where he travelled for a year.[16] In 1912 he went to England where he studied medicine in London graduating as a specialised doctor in bacteriology.[17]

Very early in life Abū Shādi displayed great literary activity. As early as 1908, when the poet was sixteen years of age,[18] the first volume of Qaṭrah min Yarā' fi 'l-Adab wa 'l-Ijtimā' was published, to be followed in 1909 by the second volume. This book was a collection of his earliest poems and of some prose articles.[19] A precocious outlook on life and literature is shown. Moreover the universal attitude reveals great courage and ambition. His first diwan was Andā' al-Fajr, (1910).[20] Between this diwan and his last, Min al-Samā', published in New York in 1949, he issued at least fifteen diwans[21] some of which were collections of selected poems.[22] He also published several long poems separately,[23] and has, moreover, four more unpublished diwans which he wrote during the last years of his life,[24] four operas and some long stories in verse.

Few poets anywhere are as prolific. His diwan Al-Shafaq al-Bāki is a formidable collection in two volumes of 1,336 pages, which includes several articles on poetry and on Abū Shādi himself. Abū Shādi is described to have been able to write verse with great ease and speed.[25] This might help in part to explain why his poetry never attained a high level.[26] He seems to have published everything he wrote. If Abū Shādi still lives on, it is by virtue of the great poetic energy he displayed during his life-time, not because of artistic merit. Apart from his courage, from the nobility of spirit his poetry displays, and the fundamentally passionate mind behind it, his abundant verse offers little benefit to the modern poet. He belonged to that finely tempered class of people who found the rough edges of a quickly changing life unbearable. In 1946[27] after many literary disappointments among which the closing down of the Apollo magazine was the most damaging, his emigration to America

put an end to his Egyptian activity. Perhaps this is the first protest of its kind made by a modern Arab poet against the roughness of the literary world around him.[28]

The role of Abū Shādi as an enlightened writer on the modern poetic concept was considerable. He insisted, as early as 1909, that there was a great need for a new kind of poetry.[29] This proves again that a change was urgently needed in Arabic poetry as early as the first decades of this century. It also shows the informed guidance of Muṭrān, Abū Shādi's teacher and friend, on the young poet as well as the influence of Abū Shādi's early education in English literature.

In his Qaṭrah min Yarā'his concept of poetry is clearly stated. He never contradicted it in his later writings. He declared that through poetry we discover the secrets of existence. It is the expression of the spirit of the universe, and reveals its greatness and beauty. However, this should not mean that the poet's interest must be limited to great and universal issues to the neglect of all other elements in life. For everything in the universe is a fit subject for poetry if the poet has the right reaction to it.[30] This same idea was expounded later on by al-'Aqqād as has been discussed above.[31]

To Abū Shādi, a poet must be sincere in what he says.[32] In the introduction to Al-Shu'lah he enlarges on this theme explaining that truth in poetry should be limited to the veracity of feeling and imagination. There are no 'poetic' facts to be asserted in poetry.[33]

He showed great independence of mind when he treated, also as early as 1909, the subject of music in poetry. Music, he admitted, might be important to most poetry. However, it is not an essential element, for the essence of poetry lies in the expression of life and the mystical interpretation of the universe.[34] Later on he takes up this idea again, and says that those who insist on music as the most important element in a poem because it benumbs the senses and can creep easily into the emotions,

are nothing but primitive minds. Cultured and serene minds are captivated by the imagery of a poem, and it should suffice that poetry be rich in imagery without the aid of the 'artifice' of music.[35]

A mature and immensely progressive concept of the unity of a poem is given by him also as early as 1909. It is the concept of the inseparable and integral unity between form and content. This important idea was expounded again by al-'Aqqād, as we have seen. Abū Shādi insisted that a poem must be assessed as a whole and not in its component elements. In his opinion, it is impossible to separate these elements or to change the wording of a verse without changing its meaning. For a poet composes the poem as a whole, and contemplates it as a whole, considering no element in isolation.[36]

He also called for the modernization [he called it Egyptianization sometimes] of poetry and its language.[37] Modern poets, in his opinion, must be free to express themselves even if they deviated from well-known ideas and themes.[38] When a poet has achieved a good knowledge of the language, he must be able to feel free to express his psychological and emotional tensions.[39] Moreover, he must be able to adapt the language, metres and rhymes to suit the subject of his poem.[40] The idea of a poet as prophet to his people is discussed by him in al-Shafaq al-Bāki. The poet, being sensitive and responsive, must appreciate his responsibility and must have an altruistic and noble aim to poetry, whether that aim is humanitarian, national or religious.[41][42]

Although Abū Shādi began his critical career very early in the century in Qatrah min Yarā' and resumed it with vigour after his return from England in 1922, he did not make as strong an impact in the first three decades as the Dīwān group. This was due firstly to his gentle manner and his tendency to compromise and appease his contemporaries. He was a refined gentleman and his spiritual dimensions were wide and lofty. Even when attacks on him by al-'Aqqād and his followers in the late twenties and early thirties became oppressive and detrimental, he was never able to match

the ruthless violence of his haters. In the field of criticism the Dīwān group had a louder voice and a more drastic aim: to destroy the well-fortified trenches of neo-Classicism and to bring in a new concept of poetry. Their rejection of firmly established traditions in poetry was dogmatic and decisive. Abū Shādi, while his theories were avant-garde, recognised many basically good qualities in the neo-Classical masters and Shauqi was made the president of the Apollo society and magazine founded by Abū Shādi in 1932.[43] Abū Shādi did not recognise the fact that to introduce new concepts a total destruction of opposite concepts was imperative.[44]

Abū Shādi began his poetic career with the naive gestures of the young aspirant, but they were gestures that might have developed into the more mature knowledge of the tools and means of the true artist. Looking at his earliest poems in Qatrah min Yarā[45] one finds a greater cohesion and solidarity of style then than in much of his later poetry:

انفقت فيك عبادتي وسعادتي ... انفاق ايمان بجود الهي
وعرفت فيك لذاتي وتأوهي ... سيان حظ فؤادي الاواه
وعشقتك العشق الذي لا ينتهي ... دين فتنت به ولست اباعي
فلي (الطبيعة) قدوة بسجودها ... لسناك قبل خواطر وجباه
وانا ابنها الوافي بجلك مثلها ... ويراك رمز جمالها المتناهي

One would agree here that the style is not yet particularly powerful, and would suspect, without much difficulty, that the poet's linguistic background was not particularly solid, but this might be excused by the poet's youth at this time. There is little in this piece or in the rest of his earlier work to predict the confused and rather feverish spirit which consumed his later attitudes and the weak structure which dominated his poetry on the whole. However, one can see the indiscriminate fascination with variety, the insistence on quantity which multiplied itself with the years in a continuous effort to versify the whole of life around him. In this he advanced to new freedoms and was able to drive home the point that

poetry belonged to wider spheres than the traditionalism of neo-Classicism in Arabic allowed. But the benefit that might have been drawn from his wide exploration of poetic methods and themes was checked by the limitation of the poetic talent behind them.

In some of his earliest poetry in Qaṭrah a strongly Romantic element appears:

46
في سكون الظلماء ،في وحشة الليل ، وفي رهبة النهى والمشاعر
انا ظمآن للحقيقة وحدى افحص الكون في مناجاة شاعر

اسأل الكون بينما الكون لا يصغي وكل يجرى سريعا سريعا
وبنفسي احس كل الذى يمضي خفيا كما اراه جميعا

47
His poem "al-Majhūl" is another example of such Romantic gestures. In a letter to Khafājī in 1952 Abū Shādī comments admiringly on this poem, saying that Muṭrān liked it very much, too; then, wondering how he was able to write it, says that it must have been due to his early education in English literature as well as to the literary atmosphere in which he grew up.[48]

The effect of some readings in Classical or neo-Classical poetry is also shown in the style of the following poem:

49
يا من بخلت بلفظ منك يسعدني اتحسبين طويل الصمت ينسيني ؟
. . . . . .
دعي انامك الحسناء تنصفني ولا تضني ،فهذا البخل يضنيني
وان اردت بيانا يستعين به هذا الجمال على قلبي فناجيني

In Andā' al-Fajr, too, the same effect can be detected in some poems:

50
وافى الربيع فحي الحب والامـلا وسائل الذكران كان الفؤاد سلا
واحفظ حديث الغواني في ازاهره واحرص على النفسان يدني لها الاجلا
من كل هيفاء ان ماست وان خطرت لم تترك القلب الا حائرا وجلا
رنت الي بلحظ ناطق لعب والسحران عز لا ابغي له بدلا
يا رائق الشعر هل بلغتنا نبأ عن حال من كان لولا العهد مرتحلا
يخطو الى الموت والآلام تلفته الى العهود فيثني جازعا خجلا

Even later on he does produce some poetry free from his typical stylistic weaknesses, but only when he is in the grip of the Classical style:

51 سماء لديها يعبق الحب والمنى وفيها خيال العابدين تنا هى
تقمص فيها الفن احساس عاشق يمثل حسنا بل يصوغ الهـا
تملكه الروع العظيم فانه يترجم عن روح الحياة مداهـا
فيرفع لحظا ما تسود رفعه الى من اذلّت بالجمال جباهـا

This, however, does not continue and the absurd use of words which is typical of Abū Shādi's mature poetry quickly appears again:

52 تأمله بين الحب والفن مبدعا له جرأة في خشية تتلاهى

The discrepancy between Abū Shādi's earliest attempts at poetry and his later verse is a phenomenon which accompanies the poetic development of many lesser poets who, under the influence of their youthful readings of great poetry, and pressed by the emotional tendency of youth, may write some acceptable verse, then discover their lack of talent. The best example of such an experience is al-Māzini. But Abū Shādi's story is not exactly identical with Al-Māzini's.

A close study of Abū Shādi's poetry might convince the critic that the poet's creativity experienced a certain kind of divergence during his ten years sojourn in Britain. Abū Shādi's basic study of Arabic may not have been particularly strong, despite his father's literary salon and the literary culture it may have been capable of transmitting. His schooling was done mostly in English. The sheikhs who taught the Arabic language at the school are said to have been very learned,[53] but they might not have been able to transmit enough knowledge to the young student whose fondness for English literature was great from his earliest youth. Neither his prose nor his poetry in Qatrah min Yarā' show very strong linguistic roots. His life later, in a completely English atmosphere, his marriage to an English woman and his continued readings of English authors might have weakened his hold on the Arabic language and disintegrated his poetic and linguistic instinct. This may have been especially felt because his subject matter was enlarged to embrace a very wide area of experience and knowledge for which the Arabic poetic idiom was not yet

available. The comparison with Shukri is most valid here for, although to a lesser degree, Shukri suffered from the same poetic weaknesses which were also probably caused by a premature attempt to change the poetic idiom. He also shared with Abū Shādi a similar cultural background.

There is little to be gained in summing up the faults of any bad literary contribution when it has hardly called for imitation. However, several writers on him tried to sum up his poetic faults and it is generally agreed that Abū Shādi's poetry lacks a harmony of meaning,[54] is devoid of emotional effectiveness,[55] and shows a frequent weakness of style and language,[56] as well as of the music of verse.[57] The worst of his poetic faults is perhaps the sudden drop in level at the end of a verse.[58] This is usually caused either by the difficulty of finding an appropriate rhyme or because the poet finishes the meaning before the end of the verse and then fills up the remaining feet. This fault does not seem to have troubled him in his earlier verse, but is a constant fault in his poetry after his return from England.[59] There are numerous examples of this and other weaknesses:

تقبس النور من الظلمة بل من ظلمات 60

where the word 'ظلمات' seems to have been used merely for the sake of the rhyme as it adds nothing to the meaning but rather distracts from it.

A banality of meaning is shown also in the following:

وارى الجمال مجملا في ذاته وارى الملاحة في بساغة ناسي 61
والعمق في التفكير قبل صياغة ومآثر التفكير للمتناسي
....
الشعر مرآة الشعور، مقامه اسمى من التلفيق والوسواس

and in this where the weakness of language is very apparent:

ولها اقسى سلاح فاتك في نصال من لحاظ ونصال 62
فتجلت قوة بل آية تخضع الغلاب بل تغشي الزوال

Worse even are the following where no logical meaning can be deduced:

تنهد امواج بعشت، كانها للعاشقين مصارع العشاق 63
سارت داويلا في خفاء تسارة وهنيهة ضحكت من الاشراق

Aḥmad al-Shāyib compares the similarity in meaning of a verse by Abū Shādi and another by Dīk al-Jinn al-Ḥimṣi, but does not notice the great difference in the quality of poetry between the two verses.[64] This is Dīk al-Jinn's verse:

عفرت خدى في الثرى لك ساجدا وعزمت فيك على دخول النار

and Abū Shādi's verse:

تنازلت طوعا عن وعود بجنة لساعة صفو منك بالحب غالية

A weakness of construction and a prosaic style are detected in the following:

65 ومهل عرناطة الفن الذى حجبت تلك القرون وآذته كمحسود
حسين الثقافة في شتى مظاهرها تحن للامس في تحنان مولود
حسين الجمال الذى نحنو لدولته يبايع السرب في حي ومفقود

and in this where the use of the word "matbūʿ" (المتبوع) is absurd:

66 فاجبت يا املي كفاك تفننا في الشعر بسمة لحظك المتبوع

and in this where the word "sakan" (سكن) does not seem to have a place after "fann" (فن):

67 اهلا فمصر مصركم ابدا في الفن صادحة وفي السكن

His elegy on Nāji contains many examples of extremely bad poetry.[68] Nash'at is unable to contain his astonishment at the following verse:

69 انه انتسج الجنى في دنى النحل والبشر

There are numerous examples of this and other weaknesses in Abū Shādi's abundant verse.[70] An interesting observation pointed out by Nash'at was the influence of his thinking in English on his poetry. Nash'at gives many examples of his foreign use of the adjective and of his frequent attempt at expressing specific meanings of English words in Arabic.[71] This might help to illustrate how Abū Shādı seems to have lost hold of the poetic expression after his return from England. It might also explain Mutrān's comment on him in the introduction to his diwan Aṭyāf al-Rabīʿ : "This poet... took the Arab concept of language by surprise, surpassing in this the boldest of innovators, without heeding the fact that this concept is very slow to change ..."[72]

Abū Shādi's conscious attempts to innovate in poetry were diversified. His originality and his continous search for novelty, as well as his love of art must have prompted him to write his operas. He did that with the hope, it seems, of introducing poetry and music to the stage. There was a strong tradition of poems written by serious and famous poets, which were set to music and sung, usually by the Arab world's most famous singers.[73] But the art of the opera was completely unkown in Arabic although stage singing, though on a lower artistic line, was popular in the Arab world, especially in Egypt.[74] It is not surprising, therefore, that Abū Shādi should have attempted this kind of verse. He wrote four operas which he sometimes called musical tragedies, or stories for music, or operas "'abarāt". They were: Ihsān, "an Egyptian tragedy for music", Ardashīr wa Ḥayāt al-Nufūs, "a love story for music", Al-Ālīha, "a symbolic opera of three acts", and Al-Zibā' Malakat Tadmur, "a great historic opera of four acts", all in 1927.

It is indicative of the new need felt in the late twenties for a change from lyrical poetry, the one type of poetry best known in Arabic, to a poetry read or sung on the stage that Abū Shādi attempted writing opera in verse in the same year in which Shauqi started his dramatic career, 1927.

But it needed a greater talent than Abū Shādi's, a more advanced musical art and a more sophisticated audience to achieve success in this attempt. It is strange that Mandūr finds it hard to understand the reason for the failure of Abū Shādi's operas,[75] although he admits to one of these elements: that the poetry in these operas is of the same quality as his lyrical poetry[76] on the whole- unpolished,[77] and prosaic.[78] However, Abū Shādi's desire to introduce this art into Arabic should be regarded not only as a personal ambition, but also as an ambition for introducing finer cultural values into his own national culture.[79]

Abū Shādi attempted another form of versification: writing long stories in verse. This is another proof of his immense tendency to versify the whole of life and experience. He might have been influenced in his

namatives by Muṭrān's more successful narrative poems. However, Abū Shādi's narratives, scattered in some of his diwans[80] or published separately, such as his long narratives Maha[81] (1926) and 'Abdū Bek (1927) did not succeed in confirming this art in Arabic poetry, firstly because of their poor artistic value, and secondly because social and psychological conditions in the Arab world were directing poetry at that time towards the expression of long suppressed emotions and less inhibited personal experience. Personal emotions had to be released in poetry before the element of emotion could pave its way to veracity and a liberation of the true experience. Arabic poetry in some fields in the twenties and thirties passed its most introvert period in modern times and a great tendency to introspection and self-analysis was shown.

The spirit of experiment in Abū Shādi also prompted him to attempt innovation in the form of poetry. It has been shown how Zahāwi and then Shukri wrote some blank verse.[83] Abū Shādi also wrote several poems in blank verse, and, like the other two, kept the two hemistich form which has an intrinsic artistic need for rhyme, as has been discussed when assessing Shukri's experiment.[84] Another equally unsuccessful attempt was Abū Shādi's experiment with what he called 'free verse' (النظم الحر)[85] or (الشعر الحر)[86]. It must be stated at the outset that Abū Shādi's conception of free verse has nothing to do with the newer concept of free verse in Arabic poetry in the fifties and after, where the freedom is essentially a freedom from the two hemistich form in all its structures which also include some muwashshah forms. The poet here decides his own form using as many feet 'tafā'īl' as he finds fit in each line of the poem while keeping to the same metre. Abū Shādi's experiment mixed in the same poem several metres; his "Tarnīmat Atūn" is a flagrant example of this abortive experiment. The lack of harmony in the flow of verses is violently repellent to the ear and is completely devoid of artistic merit:

88	تبلّج الفجر حال بافق هذى السماء	mujtath
	يا اتون الحي يا مستمدا للحيـاة	ramal (majzū')
	عندما انت تعتلي افق الشرق للسمـــا	khafīf (majzū')
	كل ارض ملأتها من جمال ملكتـه	" "
	فانت حال عظيم يزهو على الارض بعـــدا	mujtath
	حصرت اشعتك الحقول وان تكن ما قد صنعت	kāmil
	فانت رع وتراك الذى مضيت بهم كلهم آسرا	mutaqārab
	اوثقتهم طوع حبـــك	mujtath
	برغم بعدك هذا على الثرى اشعاعك	"
	ورغم هذا السمو هذا النهار تجلى كالرسم من وقع خطوك	"

There were other attempts in the twenties and thirties to use several metres in the same poem, but they all failed. The attempt of these poets, however, none of whom was particularly talented, show the need that was being felt at that early period to bring about a change in the poetic form. Various experiments in form would now be attempted, but success was not to be achieved before the end of the forties. Several reasons account for this. Firstly, one might suggest, Arabic poetry was not yet ready, from an artistic point of view, for such a change earlier in the century. The two hemistich form had arrived at its greatest strength in modern times after the poetic Revival at the hands of Shauqi and other contemporaries in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. It had therefore to wait until such strength could exhaust itself by multitudinous repetitions, and until the accumulation of a modern stock vocabulary and modern stock phrases would become a hindrance to creativity as these stock words and expressions found easy access to the traditional form. It is true that owing to a quickly changing sensibility and quickly evolving attitudes and concepts (compared with Classical periods), stock words and expressions were rapidly becoming old fashioned, particularly because many of them had been already borrowed from older poetry. Here one cannot over-estimate the vitality and importance of foreign poetry, especially Western, in establishing such a

change in the sensibility of the modern Arab poet. But despite the comparative speed with which a change of sensibility was being achieved, it had to arrive at maturity and real liberation from the sanctimony of the old form of the two hemistichs before a change of form could be attained. This liberation (one might call it boredom or saturation) needed time, and a longer experience.

Secondly, Arabic poetry, before effecting a change in form, had to bring itself, through changes in language, attitude, tone, theme and emotion, to a contemporaneous level. This is why some experiments in Romanticism and Symbolism, in the thirties and forties achieved success, and new fields and horizons were opened for poetry before a change in form was attempted with success.

Thirdly, the change in form had to wait, not only for an opportune moment in the artistic development of poetry, but also for the rise of great poetic talents at whose hands such a change could be realised.

Abū Shādi's experiment in blank and free verse was therefore unsuccessful. The worst attempt he made was to combine blank and free verse in one poem:

89	تفتش في لب الوجود مصبرا عن (الفكرة) العظمى به لالبسّاء	tawīl
	تترجم اسمى معاني البقاء	mutaqārab
	وتثبت بالفن سر (الحياة)	"
	وكل معنى يرفّ لديك في (الفن حيّ)	mujtath
	اذا تأملت شيئا قبست منه (الجمال)	"
	وصنته كحبيس في فنك المتلالي	"
	تبث فيه العبادة	"
	تبث فيه جلا لا لا انقضاء له	basīt
	انت المعزّي لنا في رزء دنيانا	"
	فأنت انت الامين على (الجمال) العزيز	mujtath
	وانت انت الامين على نعيم الوجود	"
	وكل ما انت تحكيه وترسمه هو المسيطر في الدنيا واخرانا	basīt
	وما تركت قشور نشرها في الهواء	mujtath

Abū Shādi is using above fixed divisions of verses and half verses and is not varying the feet at will. The modern free verse does not recognise such an arrangement and liberates itself completely from the fixed divisions of verses and half verses. This is why only metres based on one "taf'īlah" (pure or simple metres) are generally used in free verse as will be explained later on. Abū Shādi's attempt, therefore, is very limited in scope and is not synonymous with the modern experiment.

It must be stated here that the obscure (and unsuccessful) attempt by Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq to introduce such novelty into poetry can hardly be said to have influenced the twentieth century experimentalists. Al-Shidyāq, who was a bad poet himself, wrote some four verses without rhyme but employing three different metres, "because of his anxiety to introduce a novelty:[90] تهافتا على احداث شيء غريب

khafīf ساعة البعد عنك شهر ، وعام الوصل يمضي كأنما هو ساعة

kāmil اتنجم الليل الطويل صبابة وتنجمي لنجوم ذي تقليك

tawīl ويفرق مني القلب ان حبت الصبا ويذكرني البدر المنير محياك

" الا ليت شعري كم يقاسي من النوى وانحائه قلب يذوب تجلدا

then he ceased, apparently convinced of the shamness of the experiment. However, it is difficult to link this nineteenth century experiment with that of Abū Shādi and his contemporaries.

The fact that al-Shidyāq had previously made an insignificant attempt at this kind of verse is hardly grounds for Nash'at to hail him as a pioneer in the field.[91] His attempt remained an isolated and remote adventure made at a time when poetry needed, not the introduction of novelties, but the confirmation of its basic Classical elements and the return to its more healthy roots.

The experiments of Shukri and Abū Shādi are significant because firstly they reflect a real and persistent search among twentieth century Arab poets for a change of form and secondly because they were the beginning of a series of continuous experiments which finally culminated in success

at the end of the forties. Otherwise, these experiments did not contribute any permanent benefit to the question of form in Arabic poetry because they were completely unsuccessful. But experiments would go on in the thirties and forties in both blank verse and free verse of Abū Shādi's type in which many metres were employed in the same poem, sometimes combining the two.*

* It is not certain whether the attempts of such established and highly talented poets like Shauqi, Ilyā Abū Māḍi and Ilyās Abū Shabakah at employing more than one meter in the same poem were inspired by Abū Shādi's call to poets to use his version of free verse. However, these superior poets, in their experiments, never ventured beyond the boundaries of art and good taste. Shauqi resorted in his plays to the method of changing his metres for apparent dramatic purposes, hoping to portray, through the change in rhythm and music, a change of mood or topic employed in the dialogue. He was not always successful, but that was for dramatic failures. Ilyā Abū Māḍi might well have got his inspiration from the Apollo experiments, for he wrote a poem in 1933 and published it in Egypt itself, a significant gesture in view of the presence of other periodicals in al-Mahjar itself as well as in the rest of the Arab world. This was his poem "Al-Shā'ir wa 'l-Sulṭān al-Jā'ir" mentioned above.[92] Other Mahjar poets used more than one metre in the same poem among whom Gibrān is a good example in his Mawākib. In Lebanon, Ilyās Abū Shabakah gave a most successful example of this in his poem "Al-Ṣalāt al-Ḥamrā'"[93] and others. In Egypt itself, 'Alī Maḥmūd Ṭāhā wrote two poems in this style, as will be discussed. However, these experiments are not at all identical with Abū Shādi's experiments, nor can they be classified in the same category. These poets made sure that the same metre was used in consecutive verses long enough to ensure a sustained rhythm, before they attempted to change it. Moreover, the change usually accompanied a certain change in the mood of the poem. They employed the two hemistich form, kept the caesura at the end of the verses, and employed full rhyme patterns, including the monorhyme. But answering the call of Abū Shādi to use his version of 'free verse', the Lebanese Khalīl Shaybūb (1891-1951) published his poem "Al-Shirā'" in 1932. Like Abū Shādi, Shaybūb used several metres, changing them often, but unlike him he used rhymes, varying them at will. The important thing is that he tends in this poem and in a similar one entitled "Al-Ḥadīqah al-Mayyitah wa 'l-Qaṣr al-Bāli" and published in 1943, to keep on writing in the same metre over several lines using meanwhile different numbers of feet from line to line, thus producing a piece within a poem of mixed metres, which belongs to the more modern free verse in Arabic in which the poet uses just one metre but varies the number of feet from line to line in irregular manner. Other sporadic experiments directly in this kind of free verse were published in Iraq even before "Al-Shirā'". They were published in Iraqi periodicals of the twenties and after, which explains the fact that they have been unknown outside Iraq. Whether the Iraqi poets who launched modern free verse as a movement were acquainted with them or not is impossible to know at this stage. Yūsuf 'Izziddīn collected some of these in his book Fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi al-Ḥadīth, Baghdad, 1967. In his collection the earliest recorded direct attempt at free verse is a little piece by Nuqūlā Fayyāḍ, the well known Lebanese poet, which was published according to 'Izziddīn in Al-Ḥurriyyah magazine, Baghdad, in 1924. Future research might prove the existence of earlier attempts.[94]

Poets would start thinking consciously of the necessity of change in the form of the Arabic poem, inspired to a great deal both by the Apollō spirit as well as by their readings in Western poetry, mainly French and English. Some experiments conducted in poetry even before the successful free verse movement of the fifties took place, showed greater sophistication and a deeper understanding of the question of rhythm in poetry.* The technical failure of Abū Shādi's attempt lies mainly in his haphazard mixing of several metres, changing from one metre to another quickly and abruptly, thus causing constant shocks to the rhythmic flow of the poem.[95]

But he had other less drastic experiments in form. As early as Qatrah and Andā' al-Fajr, he showed that he was not traditionally bound to the monorhyme but wrote couplets and introduced other variations, often employing shorter metres also. His poem "Yā Amal" mentioned by both

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* More sophisticated and deliberate experiments were made in the forties. It must be stated at the outset, however, that these experiments remained relatively unknown to most readers. It is impossible to find out whether any previous experiment, from that of Fayyāḍ to those of the forties, did reach the hands of the young experimentalists in the late forties in Iraq, namely N. al-Malā'ikah and Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb. Aside from the experiments attempted or published in Iraq itself, which include the Iraqi band discussed below (pp. 784-794), Al-Risālah magazine reached all parts of the Arab world. Apollo, on the other hand, was subscribed to by the Iraqi ministry of education, as one reads on the covers of its later issues. But there is no tangible proof that any of the later experimentalists benefited directly from actual examples of previous experiments.

The poet who discovered the rigidity of the two hemistich form and the basic need for a liberation from it was the Ḥaḍrami poet 'Ali Aḥmad Bakathīr. He had used mixed metres in his play Romeo wa Juliet, 1942, then discovered that both the two hemistich form and the multi-metres have to go if a good poetic drama were to be achieved. His next play Al-Samā' wa Akhnātūn wa Nafertīti published in Cairo in 1943 was written in the mutadārak metre, in blank verse, and with varying feet in consecutive lines. But Bakathīr was not a first class poet, and his well-guided experiment failed to attract attention on a popular scale in the Arab world.[96] At any rate, although these experiments did not succeed, one can see how the continuous efforts of poets before the fifties were giving example and encouragement to the spirit of experimentation in poetry, were exploring some of the many possibilities of the poetic form in Arabic and were making the poetic tools more flexible and pliable all the time.

'A Dusūqi[97] and Nash'at[98] as a sign of innovation is merely a minor and artificial attempt at using one "taf'īlah" in each hemistich. To be able to do this Abū Shādi had to rhyme both hemistichs, ending each hemistich with an unvowelled letter:

99

١ ـ يا امل يا امل ٥ ـ يا دوا للكسل ٩ ـ يا شذى يا قبل
٢ ـ يا هوى من عمل ٦ ـ يا لظى للكسل ١٠ ـ يا سنى للغزل
٣ ـ يا حلى للبطل ٧ ـ يا علي من وصل ١١ ـ يا ندى من نهل
٤ ـ يا قوى في الجلل ٨ ـ يا حمى من فشل

A word with a vowelled letter at the end would have joined the two hemistichs and made of them half a verse, "shaṭrah", thus:

يا ضياء الغزل يا فناء الكسل يا دواء الكلل يا جلال البطل

Abū Shādi is regarded as an innovator in the language of poetry.[100] But although he might have confirmed the idea that poetry should approach, as far as possible, the language of speech and liberate itself from the hold of the language in Classical verse which dominated the poetry of the neo-Classical school, his poetry was not powerful enough to exert any direct influence. His simplicity of language and his more modern expressions, even as early as Qaṭrah min Yarā',[101] are usually remarkably non-poetic. An attempt at analysing the causes for his general weakness of style, especially in his more mature poetry has been made above. One can only repeat here the suggestion that although Abū Shādi's education in Western literature preserved him from the imitation of traditional methods, as Nash'at says,[102] it also weakened his hold on the language and disintegrated his poetic context. He wanted to translate the whole human experience with which he came in contact either directly or through his readings,[103] into poetry, and neither the poetic tools at that early period, nor his own poetic endowment could allow such an ambitious objective.

However, Abū Shādi's love for and approach to nature show a marked change from the concept of nature in Classical and neo-Classical poetry.

He called it 'mother nature' :

104 اقبـــل الصيـــف معلنـــا لربيـــع بحنـــو الابنـــاء للآبـــــاء
ولدته " الام الطبيعـة " من قبـــــل ابيـــه كمعجـــز الانبيـــــاء

and found in it inspiration and ecstacy, solace and refuge. It is possible that Abū Shādi, in his earlier poetry on nature before his departure to England, was influenced by Gibran's early writings on nature. However, it has been mentioned that Abū Shādi in Qatrah min Yarā' wrote about several English Romantic poets and it is more plausible that he was influenced by their attitude to nature. Nash'at is right when he decides that Abū Shādi is the pioneer of the poetry of nature in Egypt, but one cannot agree with him that it was simply Muṭrān's poem 'al-Masā'" which decided his trend,[105] although it is probably true that this was the first poem of its calibre to be written in Egypt.[106] In Abū Shādi there is a veneration for nature and a mystical fusion with it. He also believed in pantheism through his love for nature and it is in his poems on nature that his Romantic trend appears at its strongest, confirming the Romantic trend that was quickly taking hold of the poets in the second and third decades.

Abū Shādi's choice of themes was unconventional, and, answering to the poet's attitude of 'largesse' and love of life in all its aspects, they were varied and reflected both Romantic and Realistic experiences. A passion for woman combines a love for her physical beauty and a deep veneration for her womanhood.[107] In both prose and poetry his veneration for woman was exemplary[108] and a great contrast to the superficial traditional interest in woman's physical attributes. It has been discussed how Shauqi's best love poetry was that written in his dramatic plays, and how the public role which poets like Shauqi played in their society hindered the poet from a personal expression of his feelings. Abū Shādi marks a sudden deviation, a sudden break with old concepts, achieved naturally and spontaneously in his earliest poetry and prose. In fact, there is nothing in his later poetry which does not find its seeds in his earliest contribution before his culture had

widened enough to show the overwhelming influence of foreign poets which it showed later. This is why Muṭrān's early patronage of the young poet must have been a major influence on his life and poetry, as he himself acknowledged.*

Abū Shādi was the first Egyptian poet who resorted to the Greek and ancient Egyptian mythology. Greek mythology had been introduced in Arabic by Sulaimān al-Bustāni, the translator of the Iliad. Abū Shādi wrote in poetry many of the stories of Greek and old Egyptian mythology. But it must be stated at the outset that Abū Shādi's use of old mythology (just like that of his contemporaries such as Shafīq al-Ma'lūf) was not Symbolic, as it became in the fifties, and did not enrich the meaning of the poems.[110]

There is no more scope to discuss Abū Shādi's lesser innovations, for their influence was negligible. The symbolic trend which Nash'at discusses, deciding that Abū Shādi was its pioneer in Egypt,[111] never really matured in his poetry and was not developed in Arabic poetry in Egypt as a continuation of the poet's attempts.

Abū Shādi's greatest contribution to the poetic movement in Egypt was his founding and editing of the Apollō magazine which was dedicated to poetry. It is symbolic of the great conflict in the literary world in Egypt of the time that this magazine was not allowed to live for more than two years. Its cessation came ironically at the hands of the leader of the first avant-garde generation in Egypt, al-'Aqqād, assisted by such followers as Sayyid Quṭb and others. As for Abū Shādi it is a mark of his enormous dedication

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* 'A.Dusūqi brings forth the assumption that Abū Shādi was influenced by the Dīwān group and not by Muṭrān. But Abū Shādi is the only Egyptian poet of his generation who shows signs of independence before the Dīwān group appeared on the scene. There is every reason to believe that he would have continued this kind of growth outside the traditions of contemporary poetry in Egypt even had the Dīwān group never existed, for his long sojourn in England and his habit of extensive reading would have assured the persistence of such a trend. Dusūqi, moreover, has no legitimate argument in assuming that, despite Abū Shādi's assertions to the contrary, Muṭrān had no true influence on him. For the young adolescent poet who wrote Qaṭrah and Andā' al-Fajr before the first decade was over had been most certainly directed and encouraged to proceed on his way. Dusūqi's conclusions show bias and prejudice.[109]

to the cause of poetry, of his abounding energy and his enlightened tolerance that he was able to stimulate such a poetic vitality around him and confirm the idea of poetry as a permanent individual and cultural adventure to be sought for its intrinsic qualities of beauty and noble elevation and not as an easy means of propoganda and exhibitionism. His failure to propagate this energy and continue his message might have been partly due to the violent rejection of egocentric fanatics like al-ʿAqqād, partly to the fact that he did not produce a poetry powerful enough to impose his mark on the situation. Added to these is the fact that he was basically an outsider, right from the first expressions of his creativity. As a human being he did not belong in any true sense of the word to his immediate society.[112] His world was more refined, more basically idealistic and cultured than the noisy world with which he had to contend. His basic freedom was a freedom not from the moral or religious mores of his generation, but from the literary, emotional, spiritual and rational restraint of his period. His natural and spontaneous rejection, even from adolescence, of established attitudes and concepts of life around him facilitated his quick assimilation of Western attitudes and ideas. His fascination with freedom, beauty, nature, progress and life in general shows the deep influence of English Romantics, such as Keats with his fascination with beauty, Shelley with his belief in the power of love, Byron with his glorification of freedom, Wordsworth with his spiritual communication with nature, etc. But it was this affinity he achieved with the Western mind that was his undoing as a poet. For it not only isolated him culturaly from his contemporaries on many levels of consciousness, but presented him also with a whole range of values and ideals to translate into poetry. For these he did not find the right vocabulary, because he was leaning on a Western approach. This, basically, was the rock on which his creativity foundered. Seen in this light, his failure appears to be the result of a clash in cultural attitudes and concepts which assaulted him too early in life and before his grasp on the poetic idiom of his own language had established itself. To this can

be added several other factors Firstly the speed with which he wrote and the apparently complete disinterest in revising his work. Secondly the example he had in the poetry of Shukri which was afflicted with the same poetic faults, although to a lesser degree, but which nevertheless received acknowledgement and critical praise by two of the most prominent critics of poetry in the second decade, al-'Aqqād and al-Māzini. Thirdly the great emphasis which was laid on content in poetry in the second and third decades as opposed to the neo-Classical fascination with form and language, which led to a conscious neglect of these two important elements in poetry. Fourthly the Romantic dilution and verbosity which accompanied much of the Romantic poetry and helped towards a neglect, even towards a certain amount of ignorance, concerning the importance of compression and economy in the poetic style. The fact that the outpouring of Abū Shādi's poetic creativity was hampered by such faults was unfortunate in the extreme.

(ii) The Apollo Society and the Romantic Current in Egypt

The idea of founding a society for poetry in Egypt had pre-occupied Abū Shādi's mind for many years.[113] When it was finally formed it counted among its members most of the younger generation of poets and writers on poetry in Egypt. Their mouthpiece was the Apollo magazine mentioned above, which was dedicated to poetry and was the first magazine of its kind in the Arab world. The society, although making it its policy right from the beginning to appease all the poets in Egypt, and even going so far as to make Shauqi the head of the Apollo society (a last honour to the great bard just before he died), invited experiment and encouraged all kinds of innovations including innovations in form which were very radical. The society, however, was not formed on the basis of any one definite poetic school.[114] The only concept its members agreed upon was the call for innovation and liberation from fossilised poetic traditions.[115] Talking retrospectively about the society, Abū Shādi said that the unifying idea

behind the formation of the Apollo society* was that fine authentic poetry should express the feelings of the poet authentically and artistically, and must neither be banal nor repetitive. In the light of this definition, he concluded, the society could include many trends and poetic schools. It was possible for the Apollo school, in his opinion, to be therefore one of the richest poetic "schools" of any time, because it mobilised and united many "excellent" talents ... The creative poets whom it brought together followed diverse poetic trends: Symbolism, Surrealism, Romanticism, Realism, etc., although rarely did any one poet amongst them completely follow any one school in particular.[116]

In Abū Shādi's statement above one can detect the loose conception of terms in Egypt at the time. For there were no real Symbolic or Surrealist trends in Egypt during the early thirties. What he is trying to describe here, however, is probably the simultaneous onslaught of Western poetic concepts and schools, developed in the West over a long time, on the educated young aspirants of poetry at the time. Arabic poetry, after having secured a link with the Classical poetry was looking now for a new level of creativity, and was trying to find in the Western poetic experiment models to imitate and explore. Although a kind of Romantic trend was to take hold on many poets in the thirties and forties in the Arab world, several other experiments would be attempted simultaneously, as will be discussed.

The poetic condition in the thirties was described by the Tunisian poet Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbi. Writing an introduction to Abū Shādi's diwan, Al-Yunbū', entitled "Al-Adab al-'Arabi fi 'l-'Aṣr al-Hādir", he declares that the thirties are characterised by a great mixture of cultures unparalleled yet in the history of any poetry and has come, more than any other period, under the influence of foreign literatures.[117] The result

* Abū Shādi calls it 'school', a wrong term here in the light of the fact that he admits they did not belong to any one school of poetry. However, a Romantic 'school' of poetry, if 'school' could be used rather loosely here, formed itself around the society and its magazine, but the poets who contributed to the magazine and participated in the activities of the Society were not all Romantics.

was these many trends we find in Arabic poetry at the present time. These trends are: 1. The imaginative trend, which does not regard the poet a good poet except when his poetry is an enchanted world of shadows and images, of light and shade. 2. The Symbolic trend which demands that the poet talk to people from beyond the clouds and insists on a delicious, ambiguous and musical language ... 3. The philosophic trend which understands the poet to be nothing but a philosopher with definite views which do not yield to change as the poet's mood changes ... 4. The revolutionary trend which demands that the poet's words have the effect of a storm that shakes life in its depths ... 5. The [metaphysical]* trend, which demands that the poet talk of what secrets lie in that unknown world carried in the heart of man, that could explain his eternal servitude to life and his eternal rebellion against its tyrannical laws, and talk on the profundity of life and death, existence and annihilation. 6. The historic trend which insists that poetry should be a living picture of the people's customs, myths, dreams and developments. 7. The political trend, which demands that the poet be a leader to his people who calls them forth to life and progress ... 8. The journalistic trend which demands that the poet write on the problems of the day... 9. The erotic trend which demands that the poet offer himself wholly to singing woman's beauty and grace ...[118]

The misconception of terms is again apparent here, for many of these are not definite trends at all but are general terms some of which are connected with theme in poetry. However, this confirms the idea that Arabic poetry in the thirties and forties was instinctively looking for new fields of experiment and experience. It also confirms the idea of Ismā'īl Maẓhar that literary criticism in the mid-thirties was "in a state of great confusion".[119]

Such was the condition of poetry in Egypt when the Apollo magazine was launched. The younger generation of poets rising in Egypt in the

* He calls it " النزعة المتعمقة " (deep poetry).

twenties had been obscured by the strong position of the Dīwān group which was marked by a self-centered attitude. The Apollo magazine became therefore the forum in which they displayed their creative work.

The first issue of the magazine appeared in September, 1932, and the last appeared in December, 1934. All in all, twenty-five issues of the magazine were published.

In his introduction to the first issue of the magazine Abū Shādi, its founder and editor, wrote that there was a great need for raising the status of Arabic poetry, helping the poets, defending their dignity and directing their footsteps to a healthy artistic path. The condition of poetry, he says, is a hateful mixture of excellence and degeneration. A great amount of antagonism and futile hostilities are prevalent and a kind of idol worship exists. The Apollo magazine aspires therefore to raise poetry to its former lofty position and to achieve a spirit of brotherhood and co-operation among the poets. It will abstain from bestowing hollow titles and empty compliments on the poets, will be fortified against party politics and conceit and will seek only to serve poetry for poetry's own sake.[120]

There was no strict standard applied to the poetry that appeared in Apollo during its short life-time. Very traditional poetry, some of it devoid of any artistic merit,[121] was published side by side with the boldest poetic experiments.[122] But a new spirit of freedom was manifested, and the magazine did not hesitate to publish any criticism directed towards the new poetry.[123] The enemies of Apollo were grouped into two parties: the traditionalists on the one hand,[124] and al-'Aqqād and his group on the other.[125]

The criticism of the traditionalists centred around the following points: they protested against the varied experiments in form which dealt with rhyme which the Apollo group varied or even did away with completely, and with metres which they sometimes mixed in the same poem.[126] The protests were also directed towards the use of prose poetry as well as

towards the spread of Western ideas on poetry.[127]

But the attacks of the traditionalists served only as a stimulus. They allowed, as they did later in the fifties, for controversy and for a chance to arrive at clearer concepts. The attacks of al-ʿAqqād and his followers, however, were fatal; firstly, because al-ʿAqqād was an innovator himself who had already established himself in the literary world; and secondly because these attacks were linked with politics. Politics is the one block on which people can stumble fatally in the Middle East. Abū Shādi was accused by a bitter and clever ʿAqqād that he had been friendly with a former corrupt government. Al-ʿAqqād had been imprisoned by that government and it appeared to him that the very establishment of the Apollo society and the publishing of its magazine had been especially improvised to fight him.[128] Then, later, Abū Shādi criticised in a gentle, rather apologetic tone, his diwan Wahy al-Arbaʿīn in the magazine,[129] pointing out very delicately what faults he thought al-ʿAqqād had fallen into, and the battle between the Apollo group and al-ʿAqqād and his friends was now in full blast. Both sides tried to tear to pieces the works of the other group. The year 1934 saw the most bitter of literary fights imaginable, a fight reaching a critical state when Ṭāhā Ḥusain, in one of his more impulsive moods, called al-ʿAqqād at a celebration given in the honour of the latter, the foremost poet in the Arab world, as has been mentioned above. These emotional and violent outbursts of hate and antagonism succeeded in the end in losing for modern poetry its first great magazine. Abū Shādi, when the magazine ran out of funds and the attack continued, suspended the magazine and withdrew from public life.

Why was Apollo founded at that particular time? Egypt had been for forty years the centre of poetic activity. It was the home of the greatest bard of the neo-Classical movement, Shauqi. An active and liberal spirit towards the poetic art had come into being. Its two main cities, Cairo and Alexandria, were growing rapidly in culture. Its poets and

writers were among the first in the Arab world to study abroad and return to their country armed with new ideas. A great part of the history of Arabic poetry in the last fifty years is in part the history of its continuous attempts to forge a link with some foreign fields, and the Egyptians were among the first to do that.

Apollo's role in the history of modern Arabic poetry was to become historic. Its achievements were numerous. Although it was not very careful about the material it published and a general air of appeasement hovered about it, nevertheless it was, at its core, an avant-garde and experimental magazine. It introduced the Arab reader to many examples of Western poetry through the translations it sought and published. There was a general spirit of gentle tolerence which, unfortunately, was not able to save it from falling itself a victim to the opposite kind of negative forces. The magazine's patronage of emerging talents and young bards obscured by the overshadowing figures of the older poets was to set a tradition in the Arab literary world which would be followed, a few decades later, by other avent-garde magazines. Its encouragement of talent outside Egypt was a unifying element, greatly needed. Its rejection of the fashion of literary titles and enthronements was in antecedence to a democratic spirit which was to be confirmed later on, but only very gradually. The poets and critics of Apollo learned to respect literary comradeship. The magazine, moreover, was the platform on which experiments in form took place. It was also the platform on which the Romantic trend in modern poetry in the Arab East established itself, a trend which helped the poets to arrive at a relative individuality and originality by which they were able to fight, in their limited ways, the more formal and repetitive elements of traditional poetry. Poetry became an aesthetic adventure sought for itself.

The Apollo magazine was above all a platform for the poetic theory. There was a great need for new standards and concepts. Much of what was written was copied from Western sources. The result was often a confusion

between the different sources of culture as well as a confusion between the contributors' native endowments and the use to which they were often put. The disarray of terms and definitions was such that even an original critic like Ismā'īl Maẓhar[130] could not pave the way towards a clearer view of the poetic field.[131] But through the confusion ran a thread of real creative force which tried to find its way through the throng of ideas and experiments.[132] The bolder experiments of the time were right in their instinctive pursuit of variety, for behind them was a real artistic need which manifested itself in the sudden and consecutive emergence in poetry of one trend after another during the last thirty-five years. But one thing must be emphasised here: poetic theory in the thirties far outmatched the poetic creativity. All experiments, although answering an instinctive need for change, were attempted according to one given theory after another. The situation was to be reversed in the future.

Egypt could boast of several Romantic poets who flourished in the thirties around the Apollo citadel. It is impossible to go into the details of their individual works, but some commentary on the achievement of some of the more original poets is necessary in this work.

(iii) An interesting poet among them was Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mu'ṭi al-Hamshari (1908-1938), known as the poet of 'nature and peace'.[133] Both his poetry and his life reflect the Romantic mood that had settled over his generation in Egypt. He seems to have suffered from great melancholy at the beginning of his career.[134] His poetry, on the whole, shows a vigour of phraseology and structure that has completely escaped the kind of weakness prevalent in that of Shukri and Abū Shādi. He is, perhaps, the most original of all the poets of the Apollo group. His literary educatinn at al-Manṣūrah secondary school[135] where his contemporary, Ṣāliḥ Jaudat,[136] was also studying, seems to have been adequate; for according to Jaudat, they had two capable teachers well versed in "poetry, literature and criticism, without having the narrow-sightedness of Azhar graduates nor their pedanticism".[137] Both

poets, moreover, were fortunate in meeting early and associating with two other more famous Romantics: ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā and Ibrāhīm Nāji, both of whom lived and worked at al-Manṣūrah in the late twenties.[138] All four poets engaged themselves diligently in reading Classical as well as foreign literature and in getting acquainted with prominent Western authors, especially English.[139] Al-Hamshari, moreover, is said to have been influenced by the Quran, from which he got the idea for his famous long poem "Shāṭiʾ al-Aʿrāf", and also to have read the Bible.[141] Long before he wrote his poem "Shāṭiʾ al-Aʿrāf", which he did in intermittent stages, he read similar long poems such as al-ʿAqqād's "Malḥamat Shaiṭān", al-Zahāwi's "Thaurah fi 'l-Jaḥīm" and Fauzi al-Maʿlūf's "ʿAlā Bisāṭ al-Rīḥ".[142] However, he seems to have been influenced mainly by the best among these three long modern Arabic poems, namely Fauzi al-Maʿlūf's "ʿAlā Bisāṭ al-Rīḥ."

Two years at the College of literature at Cairo University[143] gave him further opportunity to study the English Romantic poets.[144]

Al-Hamshari is interesting in several points. One is the difference in poetic value that can be detected between the poetry which conveys his basic emotional and melancholic temperament and that which speaks of the optimistic ideals which he adopted later through his readings of George Russel and through his work in the field of co-operative village work.[145] As an editor of the "Co-operative Magazine" (Majallat al-Taʿāwun) he learnt to love country life and to idealise the village. This was further helped by his basic Romantic tendencies influenced to a great extent by the love of some English Romantics, especially Wordsworth,[146] for country life. Jaudat calls al-Hamshari the "delineator of the village".[147] In fact, al-Hamshari dedicated his later energy which included his daily work, his prose writings and his poetry, to the promotion of country life.[148] But his best poetry is that which reflects his original Romantic temperament. He has indeed some very fine poems which reveal very delicate Romantic emotions, a revolution in language and expression and several other genuine

Romantic attributes. When he wrote poetry to convey his message,[149] he often failed to arrive at good results. In fact some of his verse on the village, its animals and life can be quite banal, even absurd. A poem about the ox, for example, indulges in ludicrous descriptions of that animal; it is described as " فتنـــة الصبـــح ":

150 قومي املئي الصبح صوتا منك يبهجنـا يا فتنة الصبح ،ان الصبح قد طلعـا

and as having no equal in beauty:

151 قد جبت كل بقاع القطر مغتربـا من ثغر دمياط حتى سفح اســـوان
عليّ ارى شبها يحكيك في دعـة او خفة او جمال منك فتـــــان
لم الق غيرك يا جاموستي ابـدا وحشا على القرية الحسناء يسبينـــا
من اى ينبوع حسن تستقي وهجـا عيناك ؟ هل سحر هاروت بوادينـــا ؟

This is completely absurd, and this is where the genuine poet can overstep his original experiment if he becomes dedicated to an intellectual ideal. Mandūr is therefore wrong when he says that al-Hamshari's poetic vision was never distorted or confused.[152]

The seriousness which Jaudat describes to have dominated al-Hamshari's attitude to poetry[153] might be true, but again the poet's deliberate interest in developing his art did not always meet with success. A poem on the moon which shows a deliberation of effort indulges in similes and ends with a hollow moral:

154 كأن الدجى **بحر** مسف جناحـه كأنك فيه درة تتوهـــج
كأنك في روض **السمـــــاوات** وردة كأن سناها عطرك المتـــأرج
كأنك في خد السماوات دمعـــة همت من عيون باكيات تدحـرج
كأنك مناؤوس مدل كأنمـــا نجوم **الدجى** ورق حواليك تهـزج
. . . . . .
فيا بدر صـبرا والليالي قصيـرة فسوف تفرّ النائبـات فتثلـج

However, despite the artificiality of similes like " كأنك فـــي روض السماوات وردة" and " كأن سناها عطـرك المتـــأرج ", some lovely images are included:

155 عمرت طويلا في الدياجير ساهـرا كسيف بأكفـان الظلام مـــدرج

This poet can give real aesthetic joy in such poems as " الناي الزنجية ", " العودة "[156] in which a great Romantic yearning for childhood is portrayed, and " الى جيتا الفاتنة "[157] which embodies a great yearning for beauty and woman. In fact this is possibly al-Hamshari's most perfect poem. Some couplets merit quotation here:

158

ما هو الليل قد اتى ، فتعالي — نتهادى على ضفاف الرمال
فنسيم المساء يسرق عطرا — من رياض سحيقة في الخيال
. . . . . .
نمت فجرا ،وكنت فيه ضبابا — شاع في افقه الوضيء ،فتاها
وهبطت الحياة شعلة تقديس — وجئت الحياة انت الهنا

انت لحن مقدّس علوي — قد تهادى من عالم نوراني
سمعت وقعه السماوي روحي — فافاقت في معبد الاحزان

انت حلم منوّر ذهبي — طاف في افق عالم مسحور
وتجلى على غياهب روحي — بجناح من الضياء البشير

انت عطر مجنح شفقيّ — فاح الروح في همود الذهول
قد سرى في الخيال طيب شذاه — من زهور في شاطئ مجهول

انت ظل مقدس ، انت كهف — طائفي في ربوة الاحلام
غمر الروح في سكينتها السحر — فتاهت في عالم الآلام

انت كوخ معشوشب في رباه — مقمر الصمت سرمدّي الخيال
نعست روحي الكليلة نشوى — فيه ترعى فجريّ هذا الجمال

The revolution both in the poetic language of this poet also recognised by Mandūr,[159] and in his images shows authority and originality. This is where the Romantic experiment in Arabic poetry was, at its beginning, a real positive force even in poems of an escapist nature. In the above poem, quoted only in part, expressions such as " رياض ", " يسرق عطرا ", " سحيقة في الخيال ", " معبد الاحزان ", " فاح الروح ", etc., are not only very beautiful, but are also fresh and original.* The use of words like " فجريّ ", " طائفي ", " شفقيّ ", " مجنّح ", " منوّر ", " نوراني ", " شتائي ",[160] etc., is also new and captivating. In the following stanza,

* This is a relative judgment of value here. It must be remembered that although some of these images are now hackneyed with over-use, they were fresh and original at the time.

taken from his poem "al-'Audah" images of rare beauty suddenly bewitch the eye and other senses:

161 مشيت وحيدا مطرق الرأس باكيـــا وقد شردت في الحزن مني الخواطـــر
حزينا تهادى في الظلام كأنـــني الى الافق المجهول في الليل سائـــر
لقد اشعلت كل المآذن نورهـــا ولاحت على الافق البعيد المقابـــر
وقد عقدت نار العروش سحائبـــا عليها وفاحت بالدخان المغـــاور

The sudden reference to the ultimate fate of man at the far horizon shakes the reader and suggests a closed universe, surrounded by death despite the paradox of the lighted minarets. There is a bleak atmosphere hovering over the whole poem, but it is strongly emphasised in the above stanza. The direct emotionalism of these images gives them value and poignancy. A deep longing for death is also manifested in this poem:

162 اتيت لالقى في ظلالك راحـــة فيهدأ قلبي وهو لهفان حائـــر
اموت قرير العين فيك منعمـــا بخدرني نفح من المـــرج عاطـــر
ويلحفني هـــذا البنفسج ولتكـــن مسارح عيني الربـــى والمخاضـــر
وآخر ما اصغي اليه من الصـــدى خريرك يفنى وهو في الموت سائـــر

His long poem, "Shāṭi' al-A'rāf", also has many such images. This long poem[163] takes its title from "al-A'rāf", a Quranic word denoting a place separating Paradise from Hell. In the poem it is a shore separating life from death. The poet took his inspiration for this poem from watching the Nile river at a picturesque rather sublime point in a village.[164] As he watched he saw that the "Nile was nothing but the river of life and death, and the horrible darkness which /the poet's/ soul loved was the sublime darkness of eternity".[165] It is interesting to note that he started writing it in 1929, i.e. after Fawzi al-Ma'lūf had published his long poem "Alā Bisāṭ al-Rīḥ", using the same metre, al-khafīf . It is a poem about an imaginary trip which the poet takes after death in the magic boat of the Muse where she sails with him in the sea of Time to the shore of al-A'rāf.

After dedicating a few songs to the glorification of poetry and poets, he describes the trip ending the poem in a plaintive and elegiac note on the death of the poet-singer. Passages of great beauty and charm occur in the poem such as this:

166 في انتحاء من العوالم قاص حيث يرقى الفنون مرقى الفضاء
وطيور الفضاء تنعب في الموت نعيبا يزيد هول الفناء
غير ان السكون ينهشه نهشا ويمشي الحفى على الهضاء
سرمديّ البقاء يحكم في الموت ويبقى على بقاء البقاء

The paradox noted in the "silence that tears" is repeated in other verses:

167 مزقّت نفسها الرياح عليه داويات من فوقه معولات
لغط يشبه الحياة بما تحوى ولكن خلو من الاصوات

Other images show great vivacity:

168 نهلت من بخارها سفن الموت وسارت بمن تقل خفافا
لفها الموت في غياهبه السود واسرى يطوى بها الاسدافا

But such passages are marred by clouded images and crowded descriptions that seem to be there for the sake of mere description, without having a further aim. There is nothing in this poem comparable to Fawzi al-Ma'lūf's denunciation of man and his sustained rejection of human evil in "'Alā Bisāṭ al-Rīḥ." Very little philosophy and at the same time very little human experience and emotion are depicted in this poem. Despite Jaudat's heated protest to the contrary[169] one might well agree with Nāzik al-Malā'ikah that the poet in this trip shows little sorrow and portrays few memories, although one may not agree with her idea that the poem is a love song to death. There is little passion in the poem, although a sweet wistful tone gives it its most central attraction.

However, al-Hamshari stands as a man of very good poetic talent whose premature death deprived modern Arabic poetry of needed originality and experimentation. His greatest achievement was the freshness and novelty of many of his words, adjectives and images. He was a serious poet whose courage matched his authenticity. He is important to this work particularly

because his experiment shows the scope and horizons that were open to Arabic poetry in the late twenties and thirties, which an original poet could exploit.

(iv) There is less originality in language and images in the poetry of the more famous Egyptian Romantic, Ibrahīm Nāji (1898-1953). Nāji's influence on contemporary Romantic poetry in Egypt was quite marked and was more profound than that of Abū Shādi.[170] He had a solid education in Classical and modern Arabic poetry,[171] as well as in Western literature.[172] His father, moreover, seems to have been a cultured man, well-versed in some periods of English literature,[173] and is described as having taken a direct interest in giving the growing boy a literary upbringing.[174] Nāji is said to have learnt English, French and German,[175] and, aside from his constant interest in English literature,[176] he translated Baudelaire from French.[177] He was a great admirer of Muṭrān, but despite his early reading and memorising of a great part of Muṭrān's poetry,[178] there is no doubt that his links with Western literature were direct.

Nāji graduated from Medical School in 1923.[179] A humanitarian,[180] and a lover of life, his greatest passion was woman. He seems to have had many relations with women throughout his life,[181] and is in fact known as the poet of love.[182]

Nājī has three diwans. His first, Warā' al-Ghamām, came out in 1934, his second, Layāli 'l-Qāhirah, in 1943 and his third, Al-Ṭā'ir al-Jarīḥ, was published posthumously in 1953. In 1960 a committee published his whole poetic works in one volume entitled Dīwān Nāji.

Some of the reviews on his first diwan were rather harsh, and the poet was profoundly shocked and hurt.[183] It has been mentioned above how Ṭāhā Ḥusain criticised his diwan rather from a linguistic point of view, a scholastic criticism, as Mandūr termed it,[184] applying a literal explanation to poetic words. In fact Ṭāhā Ḥusain proved himself to have

been unable to understand the new way in which these poets were using language. The oblique, sometimes symbolic application of words was completely rejected by him. Indeed it is most ironical that the first generation of critics in Egypt played a paradoxical role in promoting new concepts and ideas and at the same time unobtrusively trying to stunt the growth of poets and writers whose works showed the influence of these concepts. We have seen Ṭāhā Ḥusain's attack on young experimentalists like Nāji, Iliyā Abū Māḍi and others,* and his distortion of aesthetic values by trying to implement al-ʿAqqād as the foremost master of the poetic art in the thirties. We have also seen al-Māzini's vicious attack on Shukri. And we have seen al-ʿAqqād's attacks on Abū Shādi and the Apollo group which succeeded in dissolving the Apollo society and suspending its magazine.

Nāji was at the heart of the poetic activity in Egypt in the twenties, thirties and forties.[185] Right from the beginning of his poetic career he proved, like his younger contemporary al-Hamshari, that the campaign for a new poetry launched in Egypt during the second and third decades was beginning to bear fruit. There is an immediate change of tone in many of Nāji's poems, a change of tone which Mandūr completely overlooked when he discussed what he called al-shiʿr al-mahmūs (poetry a demi voix) in his famous book Fi'l-Mīzān al-Jadīd.[186] In fact Mandūr denied emphatically that poetry in Egypt had arrived anywhere near such a change of tone. However, Nājī had achieved such a confessional tone in several poems:

187

يا شطر روحي وغرامي الوحيد ... ما شئت يا ليلاى ، لا ما اريد
يا من رأت حزني العميق البعيد ... داويت لي جرحي بجرح جديد
عنكّت عن روحي خفي النقاب ... فلم يزل يا ليل هذا الحجاب
حتى مشت تفاك فوق العذاب ... يا ليل اني لشقي سعيد

* It should not be understood here that all Ṭāhā Ḥusain's criticism was ill-founded. These poets, including ʿAlī Maḥmūd Ṭāhā whom Ṭāhā Ḥusain praised but blamed for linguistic, prosodical and grammatical faults, were all in need of a sober check to their nonchalance or occasional ignorance in language, grammar and the rules of prosody. Ṭāhā Ḥusain's fault lies mainly in his rejection of the experimental, and more creative side of their linguistic adventure, which was their main achievement.

عمـــرى سراب في بقايـــا سـراب وكـل ايامي المواضـي اغـــــــتراب
فاليـوم يا ليـلاى طـــــاب المـآب في ظلـك الرحب الجميل المديـــــد

and this:

188

الليالـي يا مـا امرّ الليالـــــي غيبّت وجهـــك الجميـــل الحبيبـــا
انت قاس معـذب ، ليـست انـي استطيع الهجـــــران والتعذيبـــــا
....
يا حبيبي كان اللقاء غريبـــــــا وافترقنـا ،فبات كل غريبـــــــــا
عيب اني استنجـــد الدمع لا الفي مكان الدمـــــوع الا لهيبـــــــا
آه لو ترجع الدمـــوع لعينـــــي جف دمعي فلســـت ابكـي حبيبـــا

In fact Nāji's main asset was his capacity to achieve a tenderness, a compassion and a personal touch unrivalled yet among his contemporaries. This was greatly helped by the melodiousness of his verse. A great lyricism is achieved which gives fluidity and music to his poetry.

Nāji's poetry, moreover, revolved mostly around the poet's love experience. Through this it released the current of feeling in poetry and arrived at great emotional veracity. His several poems of occasion (eulogies, congratulations, elegies, satire and other themes) can be regarded as remnants of traditional streaks that had not been yet oblit-erated from the psyche of the poets of that time. But they were not authentic streaks in Nāji. In fact his poetry, as Mandūr agrees, was on the whole authentic and original,[189] and one could dismiss these poems as mere versifications outside the poet's creative impulse.

It was the releasing of the special type of emotion which Nāji expressed, that of love and yearning for woman, that gave him his popularity. He had "responded /in his poetry/ to the suppressed emotions of the younger generation of the time, which was thirsty for love".[190] His achievement, Mandūr asserts, was that he was able to make out of these current general feelings a fine art.[191]

However, this was not his only achievement. Poetry at his hands arrived at a great simplicity and modernity of language. In this he was more contemporaneous than his greater friend ʿAli Mahmūd Ṭāhā. With this

expressive simplicity came a clarity of image which was more in the Classical tradition from this point of view than that of any of his colleagues. However, this did not prevent his images from being new and in line with the element of wonder and surprise one expects to find in the poetry of a Romantic revolution:

192 هل رأى الحب سكارى مثلنا كم بنينا من خيال حولنا
ومشينا في طريق مقمر تشرب الفرحة فيه قبلنا

and this where a metaphysical vision elevates the poem:

193 موطن الحسن شوى فيه السأم وسرت انفاسه في جوه
واناخ الليل فيه وجثم وجرت اشباحه في بهوه

194 والبلى ابصرته رأى العيان ويداه تنسجان العنكبوت
صحت يا ويحك تبدو في مكان كل شيء فيه حي لا يموت

and this:

195 واذا النور نذير طالع واذا الفجر مطل كالحريق
واذا الدنيا كما نعرفها واذا الاحباب كل في طريق

But already in Nāji some of Romanticism's bad qualities appear. These are mainly dilution and the use of many consecutive adjectives mostly of a decorative nature. Examples from quoted passages are several: "الجميل، الحبيب"، "الرحب، الجميل، المديد"، "حزني العميق البعيد" "قاس معذب".[196] These particular defects of the Romantic poetry, abundant in Nāji, will be some of the main weaknesses against which the later avant-garde poets and critics in the fifties and sixties will struggle, as will be shown.

However, Nāji remains one of the corner stones of modern Romanticism in Egypt. He simplified and modernised the language of poetry. He paved the way of poetry to emotional veracity and true experience and enriched the modern image. He achieved a remarkable change of tone in poetry and, above all, he restored to Arabic love poetry a tenderness, a sustained devotion and a direct, uncomplicated, even humble approach unknown in Arabic poetry since the days of the Bedouin Umayyad poets.

(v) 'Ali Mahmūd Ṭāhā, (1901-1949):

Few poets are endowed with the right kind of talent at the right time to create a moment in the history of poetry. But in the thirties and forties modern Arabic poetry had several such poets: Ilyā Abū Māḍi in al-Mahjar, al-Jawāhiri in Iraq, 'Umar Abū Rishah in Syria, al-Shābbi in Tunisia, Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān in Palestine, Ilyās Abū Shabakah and Sa'īd 'Aql in Lebanon and 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā in Egypt. All these poets were not only relatively good poets from an artistic point of view, but were also important as poets whose influence on their own generation was remarkable. They either created a new trend in poetry, or strongly established one already started by other poets. In most cases they echoed the spirit of their own generation or foretold the birth of a new spirit. Above all they all achieved varying degrees of popularity in their own life-time.

It should not follow from this that they were the best poets among their generation. None of the above-mentioned poets, for example, was greater than Badawi al-Jabal whose genius is hard to match. But Badawi al-Jabal was not a creator of a 'moment' in the history of modern poetry. His creativity remained outside the poetic energy of his generation and belonged, virtually, to what is permanently appealing in the Classical tradition.

The fame of these poets was not equally matched in the thirties and forties all over the Arab world. Most of them were effective, during that period, mainly in their own countries and probably in those bordering on their own. Few of the non-Egyptians were able to exert their influence profoundly on the Egyptian audience of poetry. They remained mostly contained in their own localities while gaining recognition slowly over the Arab world. The poet among them who, within one decade, was quickly able to achieve great popularity simultaneously in his own country as well as all over the Arab world was 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā.

He was the rage of the early forties, read widely and avidly by the youth of the Arab world and sung enchantingly (or so it seemed at the time) by the Arab world's greatest singers.*

Nāzik al-Malā'ikah starts her admirable book on him by discussing what she believes to be the causes of his immense popularity.[197] However, she refers this popularity solely to certain poetic attributes in his verse: the fact that "he combined in his poetry harmonious proportions of realism and fancy, his imagination neither falling to the point of dryness and crudeness, nor soaring to heights which the general public could not reach";[198] that his innovations in the form of the Arabic poem were beneficial and essential,[199] but neither radical nor repellent to the audience of poetry of his time;[200] that his poetry revealed a depth of thought and meaning which secured for it a popularity among the cultured elite[201] without abandoning the great lyricism which attracted to it the general reading public;[202] and that his symbolism was mild and simple[203] and his theme versatile.[204]

However, Nāzik al-Malā'ikah overlooks the main reason for Ṭāhā's popularity in the early forties, the fact that his poetry, particularly in his second diwan Layāli 'l-Mallāh al-Tā'ih (1940)[206] released a current of emotional freedom greatly needed at that time. This will be elaborated presently.

'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā began writing poetry as early as 1918,[207] but published his first diwan, Al-Mallāh al-Tā'ih only in 1934. He was then thirty three years of age. He had been born and reared in a small town, al-Manṣūrah, where he met with Nāji, al-Hamshari and Jaudat, as has been mentioned. He does not seem to have had a strong literary education, for he did not complete his secondary schooling but entered a technical college from which he graduated in 1924.[208] However, he is said to have read greatly in

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* It was his lyrical poem "al-Ghundūl" sung by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Wahhāb, Egypt's great singer, which achieved a popularity unrivalled by any other song at the time.[205]

Western literature,[209] and to have been a virtual introvert in his early youth, tending to be quiet and despondent,[210] much in line with the general spirit of the age.[211] It has been mentioned above that the greatest common factor among the younger generation of that time was their deprivation of the right to love and to meet the opposite sex.[212] Economic conditions now began to stand in the way of early marriages in a world which was rapidly being modernised. A cultural awakening, moreover, revealed to that generation the disparity between their hopes and the reality of their life as well as between their way of life and that of the more progressive Western world. 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā seems to have shared with his own generation their feelings of deprivation and emotional mal-adjustment. His first collection of poems, Al-Mallāh al-Tā'ih reveals this very clearly.

A general air of despondency and sorrow reigns over his first dīwān. In his poem "Qalbi," for example, this melancholy and alienation is poignantly described:

213 مستوحشا في الافق منفـــــردا وكأنه في سامـــر الشهـــب
هذا الزحـام حيالـــه احتشـــدا هو عنه نـاء جد مغـــــترب

A great search for the unknown is depicted as in his typical poem al-Mallāh al-Tā'ih which has a mild, metaphysical approach:

214 ايهـا المـلاح قم واطو الشراعـــا لم تطوى لجـــة الليل سراعـــا
جدف الآن بنا في هينـــــة وجهـة الشاطىء سيرا واتبّـاعـــا
ففدا ، يا صاحبي ،تأخذنـــا موجـة الايـام قدما واندفاعـــا

There is, moreover, a deep thirst for love and beauty:

215 ايها الشاعـر اعتمد غيثـــارك واعزف الآن منشـدا اشعـــارك
واجعل الحب والجمـال شعـــارك وادع ربـا دعا الوجود وبـــارك
فزهـــا وازدهى بميلاد شاعـر

and this:

216 للحب اول اشعار هتفت بهـــا وللجمال بها اولـى رسالاتـــي

And there is also a great glorification both of the poet and of the art of poetry.[217]

A strong current of feeling is released in this diwan where the poet achieves great emotional veracity. This volume contains some of Ṭāhā's best love poetry[218] where a great originality in his treatment of the theme of love is seen.[219]

The choice of title is typical of the Romantic trend among the poets of the thirties in Egypt.[220] To Malā'ikah the title denotes the poet's search for truth.[221] This, however, seems to overlook a most important aspect of the symbol of the 'wandering sailor', that which denotes Romantic escapism from the world of reality. Mandūr expresses the meaning better when he says that it denotes a search for the unknown.[222]

Ṭāhā's second diwan, Layālī 'l-Mallāḥ al-Tā'ih, was published in 1940. It came after his experience of life had considerably widened and deepened. For in 1938 the poet had begun his pleasure travels to Europe[223] which he exploited enormously in his poetry. This diwan contains his most popular poems, those which express, for the first time in modern Arabic poetry, the poet's own personal discovery of a European world of freedom and love which was perhaps one of the greatest ideals of the generation that was to come of age just before the Palestine disaster of 1948. During those years, nationalism, although already an established communal movement, had not yet become to the individual a constant personal endeavour, a deeply experienced motive of daily life. It still had a Romantic appeal, very emotional and rather vaguely outlined, and could not therefore supersede the other personal pre-occupations of Arab youth, among which the problem of love and social taboos was of paramount importance. Later, the eruption of active nationalism after the Palestine disaster, and the feeling of a personal involvement in national conflict abolished a large part of the Romanticism of the earlier forties and confirmed, to a great extent, the realistic trend in poetry and literature generally. But before this came about, 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā's poetry was one of the greatest outlets for the emotionally and sexually suppressed youth of the Middle East, a vision of ecstacy

to which they clung and which they greatly enjoyed. After the tear drenched poems of other Romantic poetry, a merry, boisterous spirit was released in Layāli, robust with self-confidence and male pride, a hope for an end to the turmoil of suppression and stifled emotions, a pass-word into paradise. A whole generation of youth does not break into raptures simply because a poet knows how to handle his material, or how to create new images and how to harmonise the Classical and the Romantic. Such popularity can only stem from an emotional cohesion and harmony with the hidden impulse of a generation.

The following verses contain a typical example of the kind of personal freedom achieved by the poet which fired the enthusiasm and fancy of Arab youth in the forties:

224 حلفت بالخمر والنساء ومجلس الشعر والغناء
ورحلة الصيف في اوروبا وسحر ايامها الوضاء

Europe's free youth, the exotic beauty of European women, the fascination of foreign names and places,[225] the joyful carefree life depicted by the poet, all these gave an element of enchantment and provided the long suffering Arab youth with a silky and joyful dream of life and love.[226] In this second collection Ṭāhā made a complete break from the introverted melancholy of the thirties. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah does not recognise the emotional involvement which the poet has in such songs as "al-Ghundūly,[227] "Khamrat Nahr al-Rayn",[228] "Buḥairat Como"[229] and others in Layāli, because it is not a true love involvement. In these poems she says "the poet was an onlooker, not a man undergoing an emotional experience".[230] Such poems, she considers, should be called "poems of descriptive lyricism or ghazal".[231] However, Ṭāhā had experienced in this phase of his life (the phase of Layāli) the first true initiation into the world of personal freedom in relations with women. The new experience released in him an immense physical and emotional exuberance which he immediately translated into profuse, luxuriant, lyrical energy. In fact his love poems in Al-Mallāh seem to express more

the inner yearnings of a youth deprived of love than a true, sustained love experience.[232] It was in line with the contemporary Romantic poetry written in Egypt at the time: a poetry that yearned for the feminine image and was filled with despondency and melancholy. This might explain why Ṭāhā's first collection was not particularly recognised as outstanding in the thirties, despite Ṭāhā Ḥusain's relative praise[233] of it as compared with his condemnation of much of Nāji's, Abū al-Wafā's and Abū Māḍi's poetry. For despite its superior quality, it did not present a different outlook. In fact, it only had its second publication in May, 1941, after Layālī had already been published twice (1940 and February, 1941). Two other publications followed in 1942 and 1943.

A new Romantic element is introduced in Layālī. For if the East with its exotic charms and supposedly mysterious ways was an element of attraction to Western Romantics, then the West with its seemingly liberal enjoyment of life, the freedom it allowed to the individual and its own exotic charms constituted a great Romantic appeal to the Arab youth of the forties. This was depicted at its best in Layālī. There is no doubt that this volume was several steps ahead of the poetry of other melancholy Romantic bards at the time. It was in fact a re-awakening from the gloomy pit into which their poetry had plunged Arab youth.[234] In this volume, moreover, Ṭāhā is fully accepted by his European associates, without any barriers. Europe is immediately transformed from the land of the snobbish imperialist to a land of peace and beauty where wine, woman and song reign supreme. This is very significant in a society that had, up till that time, regarded the West as the stern faced representative of usurpation and superiority.

Nāzik al-Malā'ikah does not regard the change in Ṭāhā's attitudes towards life and love as an authentic change that can happen to an intelligent, gifted young man when he moves away from the taboos and restrictions of a small-town culture and finds himself at large in the free and open world. From the moment Ṭāhā discovered this new kind of life, he experienced a

growing sensuality. His craving for pleasure became more and more obsessive with the years, as is seen in his consecutive diwans. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, however, asserts that "innocence was a nature in the poet ... sensuality only a temporary element in his life. The essence of his personality was spiritual".[235] However, she seems to overlook some important facts here. Ṭāhā was a Romantic idealist only in his first diwan, when he was an inexperienced young man living in a suppressed community. The mixture of reverence for innocence in woman and the craving for carnal pleasures in his later diwans should be understood as a result of the paradoxical nature of Arab culture. There are two sides to this nature. The first is that women are usually divided into the innocent and the lewd. The second is the sharp existence of double standards for men and women which impose the greatest restrictions on women's personal liberty while allowing great freedom to men. These elements in Arab culture have been continuously portrayed in Arabic literature, and this theme was constantly touched on by poets such as ʿUmar Abū Rīshah and Ilyās Abū Shabakah who matured before the mid-century when such problems were of paramount importance.

Al-Maʿaddāwi, discussing the same aspect of the poet, insists that Ṭāhā's true nature was inclined to merriment and to the love of life[236] as depicted in his second diwan and the following collections. The persistence of the poet's love for pleasure is also observed by Mandūr who regards him to be of an Epicurian nature.[237]

The main difference between the conception of Mandūr and Maʿaddāwi on the one hand and that of Nāzik al-Malā'ikah on the other is that al-Malā'ikah, betraying a slight moralistic attitude out of line with her brilliance as a critic, cannot accept the poet in his totality of experience but differenciates between what she regards as moral and immoral in his poetry.[238] Mandūr, on the other hand, asserts that if Ṭāhā sought the pleasures of life, he elevated them, "because his sense of beauty would protect him from vulgarity".[239] He goes on to say that the pleasures which Ṭāhā sang were

the "refined aesthetic pleasures of a noble spirit".[240] It was al-Ma'addāwi, however, who volunteered an even more sophisticated explanation, for he asserted that Ṭāhā sought physical union with woman because she was the "main bridge which led him to those aesthetic values lying behind the sensuous image".[241] Pleasure for Ṭāhā, in his opinion, was linked with beauty[242] and he loved in woman the beauty of both body and spirit.[243]

However, Nāzik al-Malā'ikah is right when she detects a conflict in the poet's approach to carnal pleasures.[244] This conflict includes a reverence for purity and for the spiritual elevation of the poet:

245 وما الآدمية بنت السماء ولكنها بنت ماء وطين
يريد لها الفن افق النجوم فيقعدها جسم عبد سجين

as well as a condemnation of sensual pleasure:

246 وكنت اسيرة هذى الدمى وصورة حسن عزيز المنال
وكنت نموذج فن الجمال احبك للفن لا للجمال
....
فجردني رجال اشتهي وجردت انثى تشّهى الرجال

However, this is not a sustained pre-occupation with the poet as Nāzik al-Malā'ikah believes. When he says:

247 يا ربّ صنعك كلّه فتن اين المفرّ وكيف مّطرحني

and describes himself as a male snake embracing a female snake:

248 فيا لك افعى تشهيتها ويا لي من افعوان نزق

it should not follow that he always experiences this conflict, for he could experience great joy and ecstacy in physical union, a near totality of experience:

249 الغريبان ههنا ليس يجديهما الحذر
نحن روحان عاصفان وجسمان من سقر
فاعذري الروح ان طغى واعذري الجسم ان ثأر

Here he is describing an experience outside his own environment in which he had spent over 'thirty' years "in trivialities":

250 الثلاثون قد مضت في التفاهات والهذر

This new experience is great and overwhelming, for here, in Europe, even the stone grows leaves:

251 لا تقـــل اخصـــب الثـــرى فهنـا اورق الحجـــــــر

It was probably under the temporary influence of a European culture that he was able to arrive sometimes at this most sophisticated attitude which al-Ma'addāwi discusses[252] and takes to be more basic and permanent in the poet than it really was:

253 بارواحهـــم يرتقـون الخلـــود على سلـم من متـــاع الجسـد

For often the poet differentiates sharply between love and carnal pleasures:

254 لكن ابى الحب فلم نأثـــــم وكان ان ابقى وتبقي معـــي

This love is described as a tremendous force:

255 * انا الجوهر الفرد لا ماســـتي تذوب ولا نورهـا ينفـــد

where the beloved has a celestial attraction to the poet:

256 الفاك لست اراك الا فتنـــــة علويـة الاشـراق والايمـــاض

But her love, chaste and impossible, has led him to seek forgetfulness in worldly pleasures:

257 وذهبت التمس السلو واطلقـــت نفسي زمام جوادها الركـــاض
....
واعتضـت باللذات عنك فلم تجـد روحي كلذة حلمك المتمـاض

A dualism of body and spirit is also portrayed:

258 ان اكـــن قد شربـت نخب كثيرات واترعـت بالمدامة كأســـي
....
وتبذلت في غرامي فلـم احبـس على لذة شياطـين رجســـي
فبروحي اعيش في عالم الفـــن طليقا والطهـر بعلا حســـي

His carnal pleasures are described fully in his poem "al-Gharām al-Dhabīḥ" (الغرام الذبيـح).[259] The regretful tone in this poem is superceded in another beautiful poem in the same volume by a mischievous light-hearted affirmation of a pleasure seeking life:

260 فقلت ، اجل عرفت هوى الغوانـي لكل غايـة ولها وسيلـــــة
....
وجاذبني الى اللذات قلـــب شقي ضل في الدنيـا سبيلـــه
....
فقالت ،ما حياتك ؟ قلت ،حلـم من الاشواق اوثران اطيلـــه
حياتي قصـة بدأت بكـــأس لهـا غنيـت وامرأة جميلـــة

---

* Meaning love.

This is reminiscent of the tone of celebration of life and living in his Layālī.

In fact, ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā portrays in his poetry several attitudes towards life and love, so that the conflicting ideas of several critics on him seem to be well substantiated with examples from his works. In this respect he presents a very interesting study, for he is the outcome of several conflicting cultural influences of East and West. From his naive poem "Ḥadīth Qublah" [261] which deals with a trivial experience, to his sophisticated treatment of love and the dualism of body and soul in Arwāḥ wa Ashbāḥ, a diversity of attitudes are presented. This has had an enriching influence on modern Arabic poetry and deserves a longer treatment than this work can afford. The above discussion was necessary because it reveals the new elements that were being introduced into the poetic attitude under the influences of a wider culture and a broader experience. However, it is vital to stress here that the more sophisticated aspect of Ṭāhā's love poetry is not the element which lay at the core of his popularity in the early forties. This is further proved by the immense popularity of a later poet, the Syrian Nizār Qabbāni, whose outlook on woman, although seldom harsh, did not usually elevate her nor put love in ethereal light. Qabbāni rose to fame in the late forties.

The works of ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā after Layālī begin to show a tepidity and a gradual sapping of his emotional energies. Once the emotional liberation was achieved by 1940 when Layālī appeared, there remained no point in the poet's repetition of these limited adventures. His next published work Arwāḥ wa Ashbāḥ (July, 1941) was an attempt at innovation, for it is a long poem based on a dialogue between several personages chosen from Greek history and mythology. Despite the presence of many fine passages, the poem is rather affected and tepid revealing, as Mandūr [262] asserts, a marked ignorance of Greek mythology, and is tediously full of talk on seduction, desires, instincts, feminine whims and in an unconvincing way,

the dualism of body and soul. In his very choice of personages,[263] Ṭāhā shows no consciousness of the necessity of creating some sort of conflict in such a work, for most of these personages have no basic contradictions with one another and the subject revolves on the one theme that has preoccupied Ṭāhā most, man-woman relationship. This work is not among the best of Ṭāhā's and some educated readers at the time found it rather lacking in appeal.[264] Despite the fact that it was published four times between 1941, when it appeared, and 1943, it does not seem to have contributed to the poet's influence or to his popularity. Probably its main attractions were the fame of its author and the novelty and pretentious sophistication of its subject matter. There was in Egypt at the time a marked attraction for Classical Greek literature introduced by writers like Ṭāhā Ḥusain, some Apollo contributors[265] and others, and this might have been an element in Ṭāhā's choice of this theme, implying as it did a certain amount of sophistication, and in the readers' attraction to the volume.

In May, 1943, a collection of poems entitled Zahr wa Khamr appeared. In this diwan a tepidity denoting that Ṭāhā was on the point of exhausting his main theme of wine, women and song, began to be felt. The modern critic reading this volume, is bound to wonder what Ṭāhā might produce next to alleviate the repetitive motifs that impose themselves here. This diwan was published three times within two years of its publication.

His next published work was a play entitled Ughniyat al-Riyāḥ al-Arba'ah which appeared in December of 1943. It was based on some old Pharaonic songs translated into French by Father Drayton in 1942. Although more of a play than Arwāḥ wa Ashbāḥ it is not a true dramatic work. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah has written a detailed and excellent study of it, criticising its superfluousness, weakness of dialogue and other dramatic errors to which little could be added in a general work of this kind.[266]

In 1945 a new diwan appeared, Al-Shauq al-'Ā'id. In this diwan a wistful search for his lost youth is portrayed.[267] However, there is an

even more marked tepidity and some of his poems have become purely descriptive, divorcing the poetry from direct experience.[269]

His last diwan Sharq wa Gharb appeared in 1947. There is here a continuous insistance on lamenting his youth.[270] Without being superseded by any greater wisdom or true spiritual maturity, the ecstacy of his Layālī has vanished, together with the vibrating enthusiasm for life, love and beauty as depicted so vividly in his early poems. There are no magnificent overtures like that of his Lake Como poem:

تلك كومو مدى النظر ... عيني الكأس والوتر[271]
طويت شقة السفر ... واصدحي يا خواطري

The loss of heart and enthusiasm is felt more clearly if his poem, "Andalusiayah"[272] with its wistful tone is compared with a previous poem "Tāyīs al-Jadīdah" in Layālī,[273] in which the poet's exuberance of spirit is manifest.

But the poet was acquiring broader attitudes to national life. Partly because he came from an Arab family of noble birth,[274] partly because he had a deep intuitive perception, he was able to feel and depict the growing national feelings all over the Arab world. His poetry is an antecedent of the growth of Arab nationalism in Egypt and his belief in Arab unity, his anguish about Palestine, his glorification of the Arab nation,[275] all show an authentic involvement in the political and national events of his later years. However, his national poems, with the possible exception of "Akhī Jāwaza" are inferior to his love poems or to his poems on poetry and poets. Al-Ma'addāwi, in his assessment of Ṭāhā's contribution, falls into the same mistake into which many other critics of poetry fall: the discussion of the poetic themes while overlooking their varying poetic merit.[276] Ṭāhā, if he were to be judged on his political poetry, would fall far behind a good number of his contemporaries in the Arab world, poets like Ṭūqān and 'Umar Abū Rīshah for example.

But one judges him on his total contribution, by what it did to change the poetic sensibility of his age, and by his influence, direct and

indirect on the poets of his and the following generations.

But before trying to assess these points, it is of interest to discuss one further point with regard to Ṭāhā's national poetry.

One notices that in this poetry Ṭāhā abandons the Romantic approach and resorts to a more realistic method. Ma'addāwi calls this phase of the poet's experience (which came towards the end of his life and is best exemplified in Sharq wa Gharb) "the phase of realistic nationalism".[277] A growth towards a certain realism in the outlook of modern Arab poets was taking place during the late forties with the increase of political pressures and national responsibilities after the end of the second World War. A great political and national energy motivated an increasing number of poets in the Arab world. However this development in the main trends of poetry did not take on the same aspect in all the poets. A definite schism in nationalpoetry took place. A large number of poets fell back on the poetic tradition of the neo-Classical school and employed all its methods which had been brought to a high level of perfection by Shauqi. A high oratorical tone, the use of stock words, phrases and images, the perseverence in the use of the two hemistich form and the monorhyme, the resort to communal emotions and the disappearance of personal experience were some of its many aspects. A definite kind of poetry was to establish itself which could be termed "platform poetry" and which would have certain definite qualities. "Platform poetry" will be discussed in chapter 7.

The other group of poets belonged to the modern school of poetry which was avant-garde and rejected most of the aspects of the platform poetry. Its characteristics will be discussed in a later chapter. The main point to remember about this school in this context is that the communal experience it portrays is part of the personal experience of the poet, and the poetry is not decked with stock emotions, phrases or images, and is not aimed at arousing sudden strong emotions in a large audience.

The national poetry of 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā belongs to the first kind.

It can be regarded, from an artistic point of view, as a relapse into neo-Classicism, a point not observed by either Malā'ikah or Ma'addāwi. The presence of the stock words and images in this poetry, the flatness of its development,[278] the resort to a high oratorical tone are all reminiscent of the neo-Classical method.

Ṭāhā's poetic attributes:

Critics of Ṭāhā's poetry are all agreed on the musicality of his verse.[279] To Nāzik al-Malā'ikah his poetry "glows beautifully" with musical rhythm.[280] She goes further to say that he has "an auditory imagination".[281]

Shauqi Ḍaif agrees but insists that this is the exclusive merit of the poet.[282] The secret of Ṭāhā's popularity, he asserts, lay, not in the fact that he depicted the life of taverns, but in the music of his verse, which acted like incense hypnotizing the senses of the reader.[283] In his opinion,[284] Ṭāhā portrayed no philosophic or spiritual aspects in his poetry. The reader can find nothing in him, he asserts, which appeals to the mind or spirit, for he has nothing but the brilliance of words.[285]

Ḍaif then discusses two of Ṭāhā's most famous poems "al-Ghundūl" and al-Mūsīqiyyah al-'Amyā'[286] and strips them of all merit except the elaborate music of words. "Al-Ghundūl" in his opinion has no idea behind it and no meaning[287] and like all his poetry, is completely devoid of experience.[288] The great capacity of the poet to depict a scene full of life and merriment and to translate into poetry his own enjoyable experience of it is completely overlooked by him.[289]

The mechanical basis of such a criticism is immediately detectable. It is even more emphasised when one reads the great praise Ḍaif lavished in the same book one one of the most absurd poetic experiments of this century in Arabic, namely al-'Aqqād's poem on the "Abandoned Goods on a Feast Day", discussed above, whose hollow novelty was naively mistaken by Ḍaif for creative originality.

One of Ṭāhā's main poetic attributes is his clarity. In a short

article which the poet wrote on Shauqi,[290] he said that the sign of a real gift in a poet was his capacity to express himself aptly and to choose words which convey his meanings with clarity and precision.

Ṭāhā's experiment in language was in itself an adventure, for aside from his fine choice of poetic words which have great emotional implications,[291] he gave to poetry a new diction that aimed at celebration and joy and saved the poetic language of his time from the dampness and moroseness into which the Romantic sorrows had plunged it. This great achievement of Ṭāhā's is not observed by his critics although Nāzik al-Malā'ikah comes very near to detecting it.[292] In his poetry the reader can find a whole wealth of words implying joy and ecstacy of life and its delights. A new strength was injected, therefore, into poetry by Ṭāhā's experiment. Nizār Qabbāni, whose choice of words was also select and enchanting, was to find a good basis for his experiment in Ṭāhā's poetry.

Ṭāhā Ḥusain in his review of his diwan Al-Mallāḥ al-Tā'ih, commented on certain weaknesses detectable in Ṭāhā's use of language, grammar and the rules of prosody.[293] This has been a constant complaint against the poets of the twenties and thirties. It does not mean merely that the linguistic basis of this generation of poets had grown weaker under the educational conditions of the early decades, but that the need for change in the poetic language, and for bringing it to a modern sensibility was stronger than this linguistic basis. However, despite the occasional mistakes in Ṭāhā's poetry, he has a powerful sentence formation and a terse, rhythmic style. He is a refreshing arrival to the poetic field in Egypt after the painful degeneration of the poetic style at the hands of poets like Shukri and Abū Shādi. And although Nāji's poetry and that of al-Hamshari did not suffer from grave stylistic weaknesses, some of the worse faults of the Romantic style were detectable in their styles (dilution in Nāji and ambiguity in al-Hamshari). Ṭāhā's poetic style had the advantage of being both modern and at the same time endowed with Classical strength, a quality praised

early by Ṭāhā Ḥusain.[294] Although it was not altogether free of dilution, it was more often compact and terse. When he was in his poetic prime, he could sing of the simplest subjects without losing in intensity or relaxing his control. But all throughout his poetic career the pressure towards Classical rhetoric was felt until it was finally irresistible in his national poems.

Ṭāhā's contribution to the development of form in modern poetry was considerable. The unity of the poem is achieved by him, often with great success. As for the form of the poem, he responded with a sober sense of adventure to the need of modern Arabic poetry to effect changes in form, but his intuitive grasp of the poetic art channeled his experiment within the range of what was possible for Arabic poetry during the thirties and early forties to achieve with success. Ever since the first unsuccessful attempts by Shukri at introducing blank verse, the need to effect changes in the poetic form was felt. However, the experiments in form up till the time of Ṭāhā, which were backed by the knowledge of various Western experiments in form, were not successful in their major attempts. Abū Shādi's 'free verse' was even less successful than Shukri's blank verse. But more gifted poets of Ṭāhā's generation, working in a less ambitious manner, were able to establish in poetry several changes in form. Among these changes, the couplet, the quartet and other stanza forms were permanently established as serious forms in modern poetry, thus preparing the ground for bolder experiments in the fifties. Ṭāhā made great use of the couplet and developed the muwashshah and gave it great variety.[295] He made two attempts[296] at employing two metres in the same poem, but this is nowhere like Abū Shadi's free verse which was a chaotic mixture of several metres in the same poem, a form which did not follow any musical order but was most repellent to the ear.

There is also an attempt at Symbolism in some of Ṭāhā's poems, but it is not the Symbolism which was being attempted with great flourish in

Lebanon at the time. This is perhaps why Karam finds so much fault with it,[297] for Karam applies the rules of the symbolic school which flourished in France in the nineteenth century and which was imitated in Lebanon by Sa'īd 'Aql and others. Ṭāhā's Symbolism is mainly themic, where the poem symbolizes a more or less complex idea and elaborates it.[298]

It is impossible to go here into the details of Ṭāhā's direct influence on Arabic poets of his generation and after, for this needs a special study. However, his influence was quite considerable and he had many imitators.[299] Ṭāhā, to use the words of Lucas, was a "creator of mood and madness".[300] Extremely rich in emotion, he was seldom sentimental or insincere, and despite his wider experience he was not prone to strike attitudes, but the greater part of his poetry flowed spontaneously and harmoniously. He was the strongest poetic voice to be heard in Egypt after Shauqi, and the main one after him who exerted a great influence on modern Arabic poetry outside Egypt. In fact it can be said with assurance that it was Ṭāhā who revived an actual link in poetry between Egypt and the Arab world after the death of Shauqi and Ḥāfiẓ. His poetry must be judged not in the absolute and not against the background of the modern school of the fifties and after, but, relatively, in its capacity as a very important link in the chain of development of modern Arabic poetry.

Footnotes

1. For a single example, see ʿUmar al-Dusūqi, Fi 'l-Adab al-Ḥadīth, the two volumes, where the contribution of other Arab countries and of al-Mahjar poets is summarised and minimised out of all proportion.

2. A. al-Dusūqi, Jamāʿat Apollo, p.249 and other places; see also Muhammad ʿAbd al-Munʿim Khafāji, Rāʾid al-Shiʿr al-Ḥadīth, Cairo, 1953, on Abū Shādi as a pioneer in modern Arabic poetry; Kamāl Nashʾat, Abū Shādi wa Ḥarakat al-Tajdīd fi 'l-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi 'l-Ḥadīth, Cairo, 1967, the introduction; A. Saḥarti, "Lamaḥāt min Shakhṣiyyat Abū Shādi", al-Ādāb magazine, August, 1955, p.14; etc.

3. Al-Shiʿr al-Miṣri baʿd Shauqi, I and II.

4. See for example Nashʾat, op.cit., pp.119-152; Mandūr, Al-Shiʿr, II, 23-4 & 53, et passim.

5. Aside from the many articles written on him by men like M.A. Saḥarti, A. Khafāji, A. al-Shāyib, H.S. al-Jadāwi and others in magazines and in the prefaces and appendices of his many diwans, see also Ismāʿīl Edham (Adham in other places) Abushady the Poet, Leipzig, 1936. However, this book does not seem reliable because it attributes to Abū Shādi perfect merit as a poet and is nothing but a long eulogy in his glorification, and one could depend on it only for some facts about his life. See Nashʾat, op.cit., for the doubts he has about the authenticity of its authorship and his suggestion that Abū Shādi himself might have written it, pp.209-212. However, Edham might have been a true admirer of Abū Shādi. In the first place his appreciation of Arabic poetry seems to have been mental and intellectual for he seems unable to appreciate it emotionally and artistically, as we have seen in his writings on Muṭrān. In the second place Edham was a fanatic moderniser and the wide modern horizon in Abū Shādi's poetry might have convinced him of its merit. Nevertheless, one must give Nashʾat credit for his doubts, for the spirit of the book reeks with exaggerated praise.

6. See the attacks on him by al-ʿAqqād and his followers such as Sayyid Quṭb in periodicals of the time in Egypt such as Al-Jihād, Al-ʿUṣbah, Al-Wādi, Al-Risālah and Apollo itself. See accounts of these quarrels in Abū Shādi's book Masraḥ al-Adab, in A. Dusūqi op.cit., pp.222, 493-8, 503-5, 509-13; Mandūr Al-Shʿir II, 44-8; in Nashʾat, op.cit., pp.55-66; Khafāji, op.cit., pp.73, 133 et passim.

7. Nāzik al-Malāʾikah, Shiʿr ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā, p.191; see also ʿIsā 'l-Nāʿūri, "ʿAlā Hāmish Kitāb 'Rāʾid al-Shiʿr al-Ḥadīth'", Al-Adīb, January, 1956, pp.41-4, in which he denies all poetic value in Abū Shādi's poetry; see also a comment on this by the Iraqi Salīm ʿAlwān al-Jalabi, "Taʿqīb ʿalā Hāmish Rāʾid al-Shiʿr al-Ḥadīth'", Al-Adīb, March, 1956, pp.64-5; al-Jalabi, although chiding al-Nāʿūri for a certain arrogance of tone, agrees to the weak poetic merit of most of Abū Shādi's verse. These references are given here to show part of the general opinion among readers outside Egypt.

8. Khafāji, op.cit., pp.31-2 asserts the fact. However, Nashʾat, op.cit., pp.205-9 denies this saying that Abū Shādi himself must have written the verses attributed to her.

9. Khafāji, op.cit., pp.30-1; Mandūr Al-Shiʿr, II, 26; Edham, op.cit., pp.2-3.

10. Nashʾat, op.cit., p.23; Khafāji, op.cit., p.34.

11. Nashʾat, op.cit., pp.23-4; Edham, op.cit., p.2; see also Khafāji, op.cit., p.28, for a letter from Abū Shādi to the author in which he mentions his father's literary environment.

12. Khafājı, op.cit., p.35; Nash'at, however, gives 1911 as the date, op.cit. p.18.

13. Ibid, pp.17-18.

14. Ibid, p.18; Khafāji, op.cit. p.35.

15. Ibid, p.36; Edham, op.cit. p.3.

16. Ibid, where Edham says that the poet visited Greece and Turkey; Khafaji, op.cit. 37.

17. Ibid; Edham, op.cit. p.4.

18. None of his biographers question the year in which the poet is said to have been born: 1892. However, seeing his early work one wonders that a sixteen or seventeen year-old boy could have assimilated all that culture and arrived at the sober outlook which the book reveals. There may have been a mistake in the date given for his birth. However, there is no doubt that he was quite young when he wrote this book. See Qaṭrah min Yarā', II, 35, where he mentions this.

19. In the preface to his second volume Abū Shādi says that the first volume had been very popular, which prompted him to publish the second. The first, he explained, had been prompted by his readings in Arabic Classics, such as Al-Aghani, Al-Ḥayawān, Al-Bayān wa 'l-Tabyīn, Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā and Nafḥ al-Ṭīb as well as anthologies of Classical poets, etc. In the second volume there is a wider scope which reveals his readings in Western literature and ideas. Some of the subjects treated in this volume include articles on Keats, Shelley, Byron, Leonardo da Vinci, Shakespeare, Dryden, Goethe and others.

20. A. Dusūqi, op.cit. pp.176-181, doubts unnecessarily that this diwan was published in that year, the only volume he had found of it was the 1934 second edition. See also Nash'at, op.cit. pp.45-9 for the argument he gives against Dusūqi's assumption on the matter.

21. The other diwans were Zainab , November 1924; Miṣriyyāt, December 1924; Anīn wa Ranīn , 1925; Shi'r al-Wujdān , 1925; Al-Shafaq al-Bakī, 1927; Mukhtarāt Wahy al-'Ām , 1928; Ashi''ah wa Ẓilāl , 1931; Al-Shu'lah', 1932; Aṭyāf al-Rabī , 1933; Aghāni Abī Shādi , 1933; Al-Kā'in al-Thani , 1934; Al-Yunbu' , 1934; Shi'r al-Rīf , 1935; Fauqa al-'Ubāb , 1935 and 'Audat al-Rā'ī , 1942.

22. For example his collection Al-Muntakhab . See Khafāji, op.cit.p.8.

23. Single poems published separately were Nakbat Navārīn , Dhikrā Shakespeare , Muṣṭafa al-Za'īm , Al-Yaum al-Rahīb and Waṭan al-Fārā'inah .

24. These are Izīs , Al-Nairūz al-Ḥurr , Anāshīd al-Ḥayāt and Al-Insān al-Jadīd . An Egyptian writer says that these contain his best poems, although there is nothing to show that Abū Shādi's poetry improved with the years, see Al-Adīb, August, 1955, p.66. Nash'at says that the Ministry of Culture and National Guidance in Egypt has decided to publish them, op.cit. p.45, n.

25. Mandūr, Al-Sh'ir, II, p.17; Muṣṭafa 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Saḥarti, Shu'arā' Mujaddidūn , Cairo, 1959, pp.67-8; and other references.

26. See the explanation of Mandūr, Al-Sh'ir, II, pp.17-18; see also A. Dusūqi, op.cit. p.249; Nash'at, op.cit. pp.126-130.

27. Mandūr, Al-Shi'r, II, 47-8 and other references.

28. From a further account of the effect of literary attacks on him see ibid, pp.43-8. Other poets before him, such as al-Kāẓimi emigrated for political reasons.

29. See the many articles on poetry in Qatrah min Yarā', especially volume II; see his later works Asdā' al-Hayāt, a collection of articles written between 1910-1925, pp.6-24; his many introductions to his diwans; his book Qadāyā 'l-Shi'r al-Mu'āsir; his book Masrah al-Adab, Cairo 1928; his writings in Apollo and in Adabī, the magazine he issued in 1936 at Alexandria; etc.

30. Qatrah, II, 5.

31. See al-'Aqqād's introduction to his own diwan 'Ābir Sabīl.

32. Qatrah, loc.cit.

33. Al-Shu'lah, p.9.

34. Qatrah, II, 8.

35. Fauqa al-'Ubāb, Cairo, 1942, pp.ـب and ج. See also Al-Yunbū', p.215; see also Mandūr's argument on this in Al-Shi'r, II, 37-8.

36. Qatrah, II, 18-29.

37. Al-Yunbū', p. ـد; Al-Shafaq al-Bāki, p.48; Al-Shu'lah, p.10.

38. Al-Shafaq al-Bāki, p.49; Al-Yunbū', p.217.

39. Ibid., p. ـه

40. Ibid., p. ـو

41. P.44.

42. Ibid., p.43; see also his poem "Al-Jadīd", ibid., pp.322-4, where he further expounds his ideas on good poetry.

43. See Apollo, September, 1932, which is the first number of the magazine.

44. In the books written on the history of modern literary criticism in Egypt, there is hardly any mention of Abū Shādi, the critic; a flagrant example: Mandūr's book, Al-Naqd wa 'l-Nuqqād al-Mu'āsirūn.

45. Qatrah, II, 104, his poem "Anti".

46. Ibid., p.34.

47. Ibid., p.160.

48. Op.cit., p.28.

49. Qatrah, II, 102.

50. Andā' al-Fajr, second edition, Cairo, 1934, p.14. See also the comment of Nash'at, op.cit., pp.110-111, as to the influence he believes Shauqi had on this poem.

51. Al-Shu'lah, p.46.

52. Ibid.

53. See Nash'at, op.cit., p.18; Khafāji, op.cit., p.35.

54. Nash'at, op.cit., pp.143-9 where he gives several examples. See also Mandūr Al-Shi'r, II, 33.

55. A. Dusūqi, op.cit., p.249.

56. Ibid; Nash'at, op.cit., pp.139, 151, 153, 159-166.

57. Ibid., pp.151-154; Mandūr, Al-Shi'r, II, 37-8.

58. Ibid., p.33; Nash'at, op.cit., pp.141-2.

59. Ibid., p.141.

60. Al-Yunbū', p.100.
61. Al-Shafaq al-Bākī, p.381.
62. Ibid., p.163.
63. Ibid., p.1150.
64. Ibid., p.1146.
65. Ashi''ah wa Ẓilāl, p.7.
66. Ibid., p.28.
67. Al-Shu'lah, p.131.
68. See Khafāji, op.cit., p.223, for a copy of this poem.
69. Op.cit., p.139.
70. For more examples of these see ibid., pp.138-154.
71. Ibid., pp.159-166.
72. Aṭyāf al-Rabī', pp. ﺒ & أ.
73. Such poets were Shauqi, Bishārah al-Khouri and Aḥmad Rāmi.
74. Mandūr, Al-Shi'r, II, p.8.
75. Ibid., p.16.
76. Ibid., p.17.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid., p.18.
79. See Iḥsān, his first opera, Cairo, 1927, pp.4 and 66-111.
80. See in Al-Shafaq al-Bākī his poems "Bi-Amr al-Ḥākim, Bi-Amrih ", pp.402-422; "Al-Ru'yā", ibid., pp.658-668, mostly in blank verse; "Mamnūn al-Failasūf", ibid., pp.625-639, mostly in blank verse also; and others.
81. See a comment on this long narrative in Nash'at, op.cit., pp.365-6.
82. See a comment on it in A. Dusūqi, op.cit., pp.243-7. However, the fact that an author attempted a new genre does not make him a creator of this genre unless he succeeds in it. See p.247.
83. It is interesting to mention here that a virgin attempt at writing blank verse was made in the nineteenth century by the Syrian poet Rizq Allah Hassoun, in his versified translation of the eighteenth chapter of the Book of Job in his diwan Ash'ar al-Shi'r, mentioned above. See the London edition entitled The Poem of Poems, 1869. The pages are not numbered in this edition. In 1906 the Palestinian Būlūs Shiḥādah experimented in this form; see his article "Al-Shi'r al-Mauzūn ghair al-Muqaffā" in which he gives a rendering from English in unrhymed two hemistich form, Al-Hilāl, January, 1906, XIV, iv, 214-6.
84. Examples of Abū Shādi's blank verse are given above (footnote 80); see also "Mamlakat Iblīs", Al-Shafaq al-Bāki, pp.1023-34.
85. Ibid., the introduction to "Tarnīmat Atūn", p.963.
86. See the introduction to his poem "Munāẓarah wa Ḥanān", in Mukhtārāt Wahy al-'Am, p.44.

87. Al-Shafaq al-Bākī, pp.963-972.

88. Ibid, pp.963-4. See also his poem "Munāẓarah wa Ḥanān" in Mukhtārāt Wahy al-'Ām, pp.44-45.

89. Al-Shafaq al-Bākī, pp.535-6.

90. Al-Sāq 'alā 'l-Sāq fīmā huwa 'l-Fāriyāq, Cairo, 1919, p.171.

91. Op.cit., p.246.

92. Al-Risālah, 1st March, 1933.

93. Afā'i al-Firdaus, third edition, Beirut, 1962, pp.84-95.

94. For "Al-Shirā'" see Apollo, November 1932, pp.227-31 , the above extract is on p. 227. . See also Al-Risālah, no.545, of December 13th, 1943, p.998 for his other poem entitled "Al-Ḥadīqah wa al-Qaṣr al-Bāli". **For these and others see below, p.777 et seq.**

95. See what N. Malā'ikah says about his experiment in Shi'r 'Ali, pp.187-9.

96. See Bākathīr's book Muḥādarāt fī Fann al-Masrahiyyah, min Khilāl Tajāribi 'l-Shakhṣiyyah, Cairo, 1958, pp.10-11.

97. Op.cit., pp.527-8.

98. Op.cit., p.396.

99. Al-Shafaq al-Bākī, pp.819-820.

100. Nash'at, op.cit., pp.385-6.

101. See Nash'at's comment on this, ibid, p.109.

102. Ibid, p.111.

103. See his many translated poems in his various diwans.

104. Ashi''ah wa Zilāl, p.19.

105. Op.cit., p.316.

106. Ibid, p.315. For more on Abū Shādi's poetry of nature see ibid, pp.316-331; M. A. Saḥarti, Adab al-Tabi'ah, Cairo, 1937, pp.99-104.

107. See his numerous love poems in the various diwans. See also his dīwan, Zainab, although it does not contain his best love poetry. For a discussion of his love poetry see Nash'at, op.cit., pp.332-344; Khafāji, op.cit., pp.158-160; A. Dusūqi, op.cit., pp.238-242.

108. See Al-Yunbū', p. ٢ , where he declares that it was his love for his mother and his veneration of her that made him venerate woman all his life.

109. Op.cit., pp.156-166.

110. See for example his many poems on mythological themes in diverse numbers of Apollo.

111. Op.cit., pp.370-4.

112. See Edham, op.cit., p.5; see also Abū Shādi's representative poem "al-Mahzalah", Al-Yunbū', p.36.

113. Nash'at, op.cit., p.408.

114. Mandūr, Al-Shi'r, I, 90.

115. Ibid, II, 39.

116. Quotation by A. Dusūqi, op.cit., 279-280.

117. Al-Yunbū', pp. ع-س.

118. Ibid.

119. Al-Risālah magazine, No.161, August, 13th, 1936, pp.1151-1152.

120. Apollo magazine, No.1, September, 1932, pp.4-5.

121. For a few examples of the traditional poetry published in Apollo see the October number, 1932, pp. 88,96, 136-8, and 139-141; see also the November number, 1932, p.247 and ibid, p.250; see also the April number, 1934, p.692, etc.

122. For a single example see Khalīl Shaybūb's poem "Al-Shirā'", Apollo, November, 1932, pp.227-231 written in what they called 'free verse'. See also the encouragement for prose poetry in the January number, 1934, p.348, and the good reception of a book of prose poetry by Ḥusain 'Afīf, ibid, pp.425-8.

123. See a strongly worded article in criticism of the magazine by Ḥasan al-Ḥaṭīm, entitled "Apollō fi 'l-Mīzān", June, 1933, pp.1225-7; see also the December number, 1934, pp.268-9, etc; see also the many scattered articles in criticism of Abū Shādī's poetry; for example the November number, 1933, pp.203-6; the February number, 1934, pp.515-516, etc.

124. For a discussion of the quarrel with the traditionalists see A. Dusūqi, op.cit., pp.331-8; Nash'at, op.cit. pp.411-412; see also Apollo, June 1933, pp.1239-1240, and p.1238; see also Abū Shādī's call for peaceful dialogue between the traditionalists and the modern poets in Apollo, May 1934, pp.742-3.

125. For this quarrel see A. Dusūqi, op.cit., pp.492-507; Nash'at, op.cit. pp.426-439. See also the many articles in Apollo which attack al-'Aqqād, for example see Ismā'īl Maẓhar's articles "al-Shā'ir al-Mustaḥjir", April, 1933, pp.918-925; "al-'Aqqād fi 'l-Mīzān", May, 1933, pp.982-995; Mukhtar al-Wakil's article "Karawāniyyāt al- 'Aqqād", January, 1934, pp.364-5. See also the March number, 1933, for several articles on al- 'Aqqād's plagiarisms; also Ramzī Miftāḥ's articles entitled "Tawārud al-Khawāṭir", in the May number, 1933, pp.995-1002 and the June number, 1933, pp.1208-1217, etc.

126. See Ḥasan al-Ḥaṭīm's article, op.cit.

127. Ibid.

128. A Dusūqī, op.cit. p.494; Mandūr Al-Shi'r, II, 45.

129. Apollo, February, 1933, pp.691-4.

130. Maẓhar seems to have participated actively in the first year. See his many valuable articles in the different issues of the first volume.

131. See articles by Ramzi Miftāḥ, Mukhtār al-Wakīl, Ṭulbah Muḥammad 'Abdu and others. It is even more interesting to read the ideas of poets who became famous later on, such as 'Alī Maḥmūd Ṭāhā (December, 1932, pp.351-4); etc. ...

132. This applies of course to all the critical material produced at the time and not only to the material published in Apollo.

133. Ṣāliḥ Jaudat, M. A. al-Hamshari, Ḥayātuhu wa Shi'ruh , Cairo, 1963, p.29.

134. The Apollo magazine, February, 1933, p.637.

135. Jaudat, op.cit. p.17.

136. Ibid.

137. Ibid, p.19.

138. Ibid.

139. Ibid, pp.19-20.

140. Ibid, p.23.

141. Ibid, p.24.

142. Ibid, p.28.

143. Ibid, p.47.

144. Ibid.

145. On his work in this field and his readings see Jaudat, ibid., pp.71-156.

146. Ibid, pp.31-2.

147. Ibid, p.157.

148. For prose examples see Majallat al-Ta'āwun from 1935 when he became its editor. See also Jaudat, op.cit., pp.86-90, 92-101, 103-7, etc.

149. For examples of such poetry see ibid, pp.80-1, 83, 160-8.

150. Ibid, p.160.

151. Ibid.

152. Al-Shi'r, III, 15.

153. Op.cit. pp.23 & 41.

154. Ibid, pp.40-1.

155. Quoted by Mandūr, Al-Shi'r, III, 7-11.

156. Quoted, ibid, pp.12-14.

157. Quoted by Jaudat, op.cit. pp.35-7.

158. Ibid, pp.35-6.

159. Al-Shi'r, III, 20.

160. Jaudat, op.cit., p.37.

161. Quotation from Mandūr, Al-Shi'r, III, 13.

162. Ibid, p.12; see also Nāzik al-Malā'ikah's discussion of al-Hamshari's love of death in Qadāyā, p.273.

163. Jaudat insists that this poem is not merely 'a long poem' as Mandūr calls it (Al-Shi'r, III, 17) but is an epic poem with all the prerequisites of epic poetry, op.cit.p.63. Jaudat, however, does not attempt to show how this is so. In fact, it is not an epic poem, although Nāzik al-Malā'ikah also calls it so in Qadāyā, p.274; it has no heroic motifs at all.

164. Apollo, February 1933, the introduction, p.628; the poem occupies the pages from 629-645.

165. Ibid, p.628.

166. Apollo, February, 1933, p.639.

167. Ibid, p.640.

168. Ibid, p.631.

169. Op.cit., p.67.

170. Mandūr, Al-Shi'r, II, 57.

171. Aḥmad [illegible] al-Mu'taṣim Billāh, Nāji, Shā'ir al-Wujdān al-Dhāti, Cairo, n.d. [but probably 1963], p.17; S. Jaudat, Nāji, Ḥayātuhu wā Shi'ruh, Cairo, 1960, pp.33-4 & 143-4.

172. Ibid, pp.26, 59 & 143; Mu'taṣim, op.cit., pp.16-17, and 19.

173. Jaudat, Nāji, pp.21 and 24-6.

174. Ibid, pp.24-6, 29, 33-4; Mandūr, loc.cit. Mu'taṣim, op.cit. pp.16-17; Ni'mat Aḥmad Fu'ād, Nāji al-Shā'ir, Cairo, 1954, pp.6-10.

175. Mu'taṣim, op.cit. p.16, Jaudat Nāji, p.21.

176. Mandūr, loc.cit., says that he persisted throughout his life in reading Western literature.

177. Ibid, p.58.

178. Jaudat, Nāji, pp.144-5.

179. Ibid., p.51.

180. Ibid, p.53.

181. Ibid, pp.111-117, 129-132, 142.

182. Ibid, pp. 29 & 141; Mu'taṣim, op.cit., p.84.

183. See Jaudat, Nāji, pp.77-81.

184. Al-Shi'r, II, [illegible].61; see also Nāji's reply to Ṭāhā Ḥusain's criticism in Jaudat, Nāji, pp.86-92.

185. See ibid., [illegible] p.100, for a description of literary life in Cairo in the thirties.

186. Pp. 69-85; see especially p.75.

187. Dīwān Nāji edited by Aḥmad Rāmi and others, Cairo, 1961, p.149.

188. Ibid, p.147.

189. Al-Shi'r, II, 61.

190. Ibid, p.57.

191. Ibid, p.61.

192. Dīwān Nāji, p.181.

193. Ibid, p.39, see also his impressive poem "Al-Aṭlāl", pp.341-7.

194. Ibid, p.40.

195. Ibid, pp.181-2.

196. See above Nos. 187 & 188 for the poems quoted.

197. Shi'r 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā, pp.7-16.

198. Ibid, p.12.

199. Ibid, pp.13-14.

200. Ibid, pp.8-11.

201. Ibid, p.14.

202. Ibid, p.15.

203. Ibid, p.14.

204. Ibid, pp.15-16. In fact the bulk of his poetry deals mainly with two themes, love and politics, a typical combination in many poets of the thirties and forties.
Several other writers commented on 'moderation' as an element in Ṭāhā's poetry. Among them, Abū Shādi related him to the 'middle school' in modern Arabic poetry, a school which in his opinion "sticks to the conventional music of poetry and to a powerful language and traditional expression". This school "deals with well-known meanings, innovating a little ... its greatest protagonist was 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāha. It is now represented by Aziz Abaẓah." (From Khafāji, Rā'id al-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth, p.212.) However, Abū Shādi's misguided opinion above misses the point which Nāzik recognises so clearly, namely that the poet was a genuine innovator whose authentic talent guided the extent of his adventure. In fact Ṭāhā's approach in his first two diwans was instinctively well-guided. There is absolutely no aesthetic or spiritual relationship between him and such reactionary poets as 'Aziz Abāẓah.

205. See the comment of N. al-Malā'ikah, Shi'r 'Ali, p.27.

206. This despite the fact that she recognises the eruption of Ṭāhā's fame when Layāli was published, and the popularity of the volume in the forties, ibid.

207. Anwar al-Ma'addāwi, 'Alī Maḥmūd Ṭāhā, al-Shā'ir wa al-Insān, Baghdād, 1965, p.21.

208. Malā'ikah, ibid, p.18; Al-Sayyid Taqiyy al-Dīn al-Sayyid, 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā, Ḥayātuhu wa Shi ruhu, Cairo, 1964, p.25.

209. Jaudat, M. A. al-Hamshari, pp.19-20 and Nājī, p.59; Sayyid, op.cit. p.35, where he also describes his library saying that it contained more Western than Arabic books.

210. Ma'addāwi, op.cit. pp.20-3.

211. Ibid, pp.23-29.

212. See also ibid; also Sayyid, op.cit. pp.30-1.

213. Al-Mallāḥ al-Tā'ih, 5th edition, [1943?], p.55.

214. Ibid, p.32.

215. Ibid, p.21.

216. Ibid, p.133.

217. See his poems "Mīlād Shā'ir", ibid, pp.3-21; "Ghurfat al-Shā'ir", ibid, pp.35-6; "Allāh wa al-Sha'ir", ibid, pp.77-117.

218. Malā'ikah Shi'r 'Ali, pp.366-7.

219. Ibid, pp.50-3 where she discusses one of his more original poems, "al-Nashīd".

220. For example Nāji's Mā Warā' al-Ghamām, Maḥmūd Abū al-Wafā's Anfās Muhtariqah, Maḥmūd Ḥasan Ismā'īl's Ayna al-Mafarr, etc.

221. Shi'r 'Ali, p.378.

222. Al-Shi'r, II, 82-3.

223. Writers on him are all agreed on the importance of these trips for his poetry; see al-Ma'addāwi, op.cit., pp.19 & 60; al-Malā'ikah, Shi'r 'Ali, p.25; Sayyid, op.cit. pp.38-40 & 117.

224. Layāli 'l-Mallāḥ al-Tā'ih, fifth edition, Cairo, n.d., p.86. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, however, condemns this overture, on moralistic grounds, Shi'r 'Ali, p.197.

225. See Layāli for words like ghundūl, carnavāl, (p.3), Vinīsia, Varsōfia (p.6) Como (p.49) Rayn (the Rhine) al-Ār (p.95), etc.

226. In his "Sīranādā Miṣriyyah", ibid, pp.73-5, he transfers the atmosphere of a European serenade to Egypt most successfully.

227. Ibid, pp.2-9.

228. Ibid, pp.92-95.

229. Ibid, pp.48-54.

230. Shi'r 'Ali, p.54.

231. Ibid, p.40; see also her elaboration on the theme on pp.42-4 & 54-70, where she differentiates clearly between love and "ghazal".

232. For more on this theme of emotional and sexual repression see Ma'addāwi, op.cit., pp.50-57.

233. Hadīth al-Arbi'ā', Volume III, 159-167.

234. It is strange that Mandūr does not discuss this phenomenon of Layāli but quickly passes over the diwan dwelling mostly on one poem "Sīranādā Misriyyah". See Shi'r, II, 85-7.

235. Shi'r 'Ali, p.81. See also pp.258-265.

236. Al-Ma'addāwi was speaking from his personal knowledge of the poet, see op.cit. p.62. See also p.70, p.57 and pp.59-62. See also Sayyid, op.cit., p.126 and other places.

237. Al-Shi'r II, 83. See also Qadāyā Jadīdah, p.103.

238. See for example op.cit., p.29 & p.197; see also her chapter on love and sex, ibid, pp.258-265.

239. Loc.cit.

240. Ibid.

241. Op.cit., pp.62-3.

242. Ibid, p.62.

243. Ibid, p.63.

244. Loc.cit.

245. Arwāḥ wa Ashbāḥ, first edition, Cairo, 1942, p.27.

246. Ibid, p.20. See also his interesting poem "Hia" in Layāli, pp.44-47.

247. Layāli, p.90.

248. Arwāḥ, p.20.

249. Layāli, p.52.

250. Ibid, p.51.

251. Ibid.

252. Op.cit., pp.62-3.

253. Arwāḥ, p.24.

254. Al-Shauq al-Ā'id, first edition, Cairo, 1945, p.53.

255. Ibid.

256. Ibid., p.107.

257. Ibid., pp.107-108.

258. Sharq wa Gharb, Cairo, 1947, p.33. See also "Sāriyatu 'l-Fajr", Zahr wa Khamr third edition, Cairo, [1944], pp.24-27. See also al-Ma'addāwi, op.cit., p.65 for a comment on it.

259. Al-Shauq al-'Ā'id, pp.104-106. See also Arwāḥ wa Ashbāḥ, pp.16-20.

260. Al-Shauq al-'Ā'id, pp.6-7.

261. Zahr wa Khamr, pp.32-3.

262. Mīzān, pp.32-3.

263. See Arwāḥ wa Ashbāḥ, pp.6-9 for a list of and annotations on these personages.

264. See Mandūr, Mīzān, pp.30-38 for a full discussion on this volume.

265. See for example two articles on Apollo, god of poetry in Greek mythology, one by 'Ali 'l-'Ināni, "Apollon wa 'l-Shi'r al-Ḥayy", Apollo magazine, October, 1932, pp.113-24 and the other by 'Īsā Iskander al-Ma'lūf, "Apollon, Ilāh al-Ghinā'", ibid., pp.132-4.

266. Shi'r 'Ali, pp.317-342; see also Mandūr, Al-Shi'r, II, 98-102; Sayyid, op.cit., pp.116-125. However, Sayyid offers no critical discussion of the play.

267. For example see his lovely poem "Al-Shauq al-'Ā'id", pp.8-9.

268. See for example his poems "Jazīrat al-'Ushshāq", ibid., pp.10-12; and "Ṭāqat Zahr", ibid., pp.13-15.

269. For more on this diwan see Mandūr, Al-Shi'r, II, 104-107; Sayyid, op.cit., pp.128-9.

270. See pp.41 and 50-2.

271. Layālī, p.49.

272. Sharq wa Gharb, pp.53-59.

273. Pp. 38-91.

274. On his family lineage see Sayyid, ibid., p.23 where he relates the poet's family to Ḥusain bin 'Ali, the grandson of the Prophet.

275. See for example his three poems on Palestine in his diwan Sharq wa Gharb, "Ilā Abnā' al-Sharq", pp.69-78, "Yaum Filasṭīn", pp.79-85 and "Min al-A'māq", pp.86-91; his famous poem on Palestine "Akhī Jāwaza 'l-Ẓālimūna 'l-Madā", Ma'addāwi, op.cit., pp.90-91; see other poems revolving around Arab national themes in Sharq wa Gharb, Zahr wa Khamr (his poem "'Ām Jadīd " pp.89-96 is notable for strong feelings on past Arab glory); in Al-Shauq al-'Ā'id, etc.

276. However, N. al-Malā'ikah has an interesting discussion on theme in poetry with special reference to Ṭāhā's verse, see Shi'r 'Ali, pp.33-41.

277. Op.cit., p.79 et seq.

278. N. Malā'ikah mentions the flatness of the development of such poems. However, she means something different to what is meant above by the expression. By flatness it is here meant that the poem does not grow organically to a climax. This should not mean, as N. al-Malā'ikah asserts (p.121) that every verse of the poem is charged with the same amount of emotion as the other. The poem, instead of growing steadily to a climax, is divided into emotional units which work in waves or jets.

279. See ibid. pp.142-156; Sayyid, op.cit. pp.393-8; Mandūr, Al-Shi'r, II, p.82; Ṭāhā Ḥusain, Ḥadīth al-Arbi'ā', Volume III, 166.

280. Shi'r 'Ali, p.143.

281. Ibid, p.147.

282. Dirāsāt, p.140. See his essay on him entitled "Ḍajīj al-Alfāẓ al-Khallabah 'ind 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā", ibid, pp.136-153.

283. Ibid, p.139.

284. Ibid, p.140.

285. Ibid, p.142.

286. See the more enlightened discussion of Ma'addāwi on this last poem, op.cit., pp.120-128.

287. Dirāsāt, pp.145, 146, 147.

288. Ibid, p.148.

289. See Mandūr's protest on his criticism, Al-Shi'r, II, pp.80-81.

290. Apollo, December, 1932, p.352.

291. See N. al-Malā'iakah, Shi'r 'Ali, pp.161-4.

292. Ibid, pp.169-174 where she refers to the many words in his poetry which denote "colour and light".

293. 'Ḥadīth al-Arbi'ā'', III, 166-7; Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, Shi'r 'Ali, pp.175-181 & 214-222.

294. Ḥadīth al-Arbi'ā', III, .166.

295. See Malā'ikah, Shi'r 'Ali, pp.202-8 for her enlightened treatment of the subject.

296. See Sharq wa Gharb for his poem "Alḥān wa Ash'ār fī Manzil Richard Wagner", pp.8-20 where he employs al-rajaz and al-basīṭ; and Al-Shauq al-'Ā'id, for his poem "Hia wa Huwa, Ṣafaḥat min Ḥubb", pp.37-68 where he employs al-sarī' and al-mutaqārab metres. Mala'ikah, however, Shi'r 'Ali p.190 must have overlooked the first poem when she asserted that Ṭaha had only one single poem which employed two metres, meaning the last poem mentioned above.

297. Al-Ramziyyah, p.180. See also Malā'ika's discussion on Ṭāhā's Symbolism, Shi'r 'Ali, pp.164-9.

298. See for example his poems "al-Timthāl" and "al-'Ushshāq al-Thalāthah" in Layāli, pp.82-5 & 130-141 respectively; and his poem "Imra'ah wa Shaiṭān", in Al-Shauq al-'Ā'id, pp.17-34. See also Malā'ika's criticism of this long poem in Shi'r 'Ali, pp.277-284.

299. A critic can find ample material on this in papers and magazines of the forties; see also ibid, p.27.

300. Op.cit., p.146.

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SECTION 2: AL-SHABBI OF TUNISIA

A glance at the examples of Tunisian poetry in the first four decades of this century shows that the obscurity suffered by Tunisian poets other than al-Shābbi in the Arab world was mainly due to the general lack of strength in their poetry.[1] The poems in the selections of both M.F. Ibn ʿĀshūr, and Z.A. Sanūsi,* do not show any impressive creativity and are reminiscent of less successful poetry in the Middle East.

The greatest weakness of this poetry as seen in these selections lies mainly in its general structure and sentence formation, but other prosodical and linguistic weaknesses exist.[2] The first explanation which imposes itself on the critic is the fact that nineteenth century poetry in Tunisia was not blessed with a great poet to confirm its poetic revival in a powerful verse contribution. No Bārūdi or Shauqi appeared there. Then, when Romanticism, with its tendency to dilute and deviate from accepted, well-established ways of expression and from the well cultivated images of Classicism began to develop in Tunisia towards the second decade of this century, the ground had not been made strong for its advent. It was introduced onto a relatively weak basis which made it even weaker still. This was to affect al-Shābbi's own contribution which was not able to rid itself completely of the basic structural weaknesses of the local contribution.

In most Tunisian poets Romanticism appeared as a tendency towards despondency and melancholy. This must have been due, not only to the oppressive political and social conditions in Tunisia under French rule, as Ibn ʿĀshūr emphasises,[3] but also to the discrepancy discovered between the progressive life in the West and life at home, as well as between

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* It is clear that these selections give only a limited scope for judgment, but it is usual for such selections to be authentically representative.

ideals and reality. This mood which dominates many examples of poetry[4] written in the second and third decades of this century was to lead to the release of a Romantic current which found its greatest expression in al-Shābbi, during the third decade. Tunisian Romanticism was greatly guided by the examples of Romantic poetry translated from French.[5] A personal tone and an introspective attitude gradually began to take hold of some examples of poetry[6] contemporaneously with the same movement in Arabic poetry elsewhere and to express the inner feelings of the poet and his personal experience. Not only Egyptian poetry, but especially that of al-Mahjar affected Tunisian poetry greatly.[7]

Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbi (1909-1934) grew up in a literary environment which had been open, therefore, to artistic currents blowing on it from East and West, and benefited greatly from the situation. However, despite the presence of contemporary attempts in Tunisia to innovate in poetry, to write in the Romantic trend, to treat the theme of nature, to resort to introspective reveries and to look inward towards the poet's own experience in life, i.e. despite the fact that most of the characteristics of al-Shābbi's poetry were present in Tunisian poetry, his appearance remains a phenomenon in the history of modern Tunisian poetry. A. Karrū recognises this and even tends to exaggerate al-Shābbi's position.[8] 'U. Farrūkh, on the other hand, although he sees in al-Shābbi a great talent unequalled by any of his contemporary poets in Tunisia,[9] does not seem to realise the depth of his revolution or the extent of his intellectual and artistic adventure, when measured against his time and place. But al-Shābbi's achievement was spectacular, for he was endowed with a deep poetic and social insight which paved its way quite early to a harmonious fusion of the personal and communal. He was able to adopt a new level of approach unprecedented in modern Arabic poetry except in scattered examples of Mahjar poetry such as Nu'aima's famous poem "Akhī", mentioned above. Al-Shābbi has several such poems in which the personal torment of the poet is suffered

on behalf of the community and national failures enter the inner experience of the poet, arousing agonised personal emotions.[10]

Al-Shābbi lived a very short life indeed, and his poetry, which began immature and unsure of itself, was never given sufficient scope to attain its full dimensions.[11] His rise in an environment which, with its backwardness, its fatalistic mentality, its submission to obsolete traditions and to reactionary forces,[12] harboured all the causes for rebellion, governed his artistic mood and his poetic emphasis. However, the general debility of the poetic condition in Tunisia at the time offset his progress and weakened his artistic rebellion, because he could never rid himself completely of local poetic weaknesses. Moreover, aside from the retarding effect of his immediate poetic heritage in Tunisia, the very fact that he directed himself towards introducing changes in poetry, away from Classical motives, made him less dependent on the terse, well constructed Classical poetry and more dependent on other innovators in Arabic who included Gibrān, a poet not noted for strength in his verse contribution.[13] He had also to depend on translated works, particularly from French, because he knew no foreign language.[14] But despite all these drawbacks, al-Shābbi had the makings of a great poet.

Al-Shābbi was born in the town of al-Shābbiyyah near the city of Tauzer,[15] a part of Southern Tunisia noted for its beautiful scenery. His father was an Azhar graduate and a judge[16] whose career took him from one town to another, a fact which exposed the poet's early education to several interruptions.[17] His earlier education seems to have been received partly at home under the supervision of his father and partly at one of the traditional kuttābs.[18] By the age of nine he had already memorised the Quran.[19] After having read several books on religion, sufism and philosophy from his father's library,[20] he was sent, at the age of twelve, to the College Mosque of al-Zaitūnah where he read religious and linguistic studies until 1927 when he graduated.[21] Three

years later he graduated from the Law College in Tunis.[22]

His life during those nine years in the capital seems to have been very progressive on a cultural level. Its most important aspect is the fact that he read widely and extensively in both Classical and modern literature.[23] He was in constant touch with the contemporary literature in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and al-Mahjar.[24] Among the authors he read were Ṭāhā Ḥusain,[25] al-Manfalūṭi and al-'Aqqād in Egypt,[26] as well as such Mahjar poets as Iliyā Abū Mādi, Nu'aimah and Gibrān.[27] The influence of Gibrān on al-Shābbi was the subject of the book above mentioned by Kh. M. al-Tillīsi.[28] Karrū, al-Shābbi's most enthusiastic biographer, has also insisted on the profound influence of al-Mahjar school on him.[29] When Apollo was founded in 1932, al-Shābbi was one of its most ardent contributors.[30]

Moreover, al-Shābbi seems to have been an avid reader of Western literature,[31] which he read only in translations. Among the Western authors he loved, Lamartine and Goethe are particularly noted.[32]

Al-Shābbi's life in Tunis the capital, seems, moreover, to have been positively active in the literary and social fields. His most important literary event was perhaps the lecture he delivered in 1929 at the Khaldūniyyah club in Tunis. This was, astonishingly, the first lecture he ever delivered. It was entitled "al-Khayāl al-Shi'rī 'Ind al-'Arab", and was published the following year in book form. In this lecture al-Shābbi might be regarded as the boldest and most radical avant garde Arab poet in the first half of this century.[33] The depth of his rejection of old methods in Arabic literature, on a theoretical basis, is an astonishing phenomenon of rebellion unequalled by the rebellion of any of his contemporaries, including Nu'aimah, 'Aqqād and Gibrān. This will be elaborated shortly.

The death of his father in 1929 took him away eventually from the capital, but he remained diligently in touch with literary events in

Tunisia and the Arab world. Some of his biographers mention his great misery at the death of his father, an unhappiness accentuated by the fact that the burden of his family fell entirely on the poet's shoulders.[34] Some biographers also mention an unhappy marriage,[35] and some mention an early love which tragically ended with the premature death of the beloved,[36] apparently a common event in the life of many Romantic poets of the period, as has been noted above. At any rate there seems to have been several personal causes which accentuated a mood of despondency and gloom already spreading in Tunisian poetry at the time. Al-Shābbi's fatal illness[37] which killed him at the age of twenty-five, must have been a decisive factor in determining the extent of his melancholy. However, his poetry shows a definite emotional struggle of a rare quality between the despair he felt and the great and virile love of life which characterised his basic temperament.

But before discussing al-Shābbi's poetic achievement it is interesting to see what his ideas on poetry were.

In his famous lecture Al-Khayāl al-Shi'ri 'Ind al-'Arab al-Shābbi's allegiance is clearly seen to be to Western poetic methods rather than to any Classical or contemporaneous poetic contribution in Arabic. An immature ardour had led him to a form of absolute negation of the Arab literary heritage so strong that it can be described as the most extreme blow given at the period to the Arab literary heritage. And it was not only the heritage which was questioned here, but also the Arab mind, psyche and sensibility. From now on direct and oblique attacks were to be directed, with varying emphasis, to the Arab creative talent, or to the Arab creative output, by many Arab writers and poets who had fallen under an overwhelming influence of Western ideas on literature and art, as will be shown later on.

One can only conjecture here that the audience to whom al-Shābbi spoke at al-Khaldūniyyah club was not only Moslem but had been predominantly

reared in the tradition of the Classical Arabic culture. Al-Shābbi addressed them thus:

"My probing into Arabic literature and its spirit has led me to the conclusion that it is, in its entirety and without any exception, a materialistic literature, lacking in spiritual heights, in inspiration and in insight towards either the future or the essence of things....It is a naive expression that penetrates no depths and reveals no profound thought..."[38] These deficiencies stem from the fact that this literature "was dictated by the Arab spirit"[39] which is fiery, extemporaneous and oratorical, with no capacity to probe and penetrate [the essence of things]. It is moreover, purely materialistic and treats only the external aspects of things. These two qualities - the oratorical and the materialistic - have weakened the imaginative faculty of the Arabs....and it was these two qualities which made the Arabs regard their poets, not as messengers of life, but as orators....There is no doubt that a great amount of Arabic poetry is nothing but versified oratories.[40]

At his best, the Arab poet, in his opinion, was merely a photographer who sought to picture the external image of things and not their internal effect on the spirit.[41] Arab poets did not feel the sublimity of nature or any awe towards it, but looked at it as one would look at an embroidered and beautiful garment...they did not feel the current of life which flows in the heart of nature except very slightly and naively, never experiencing ecstacy.[42] As for the attitude of Arab poets to woman, it was "a base and mean attitude reaching the lowest degree of materialism, and understanding nothing of woman except that she is a body to be desired and enjoyed..."[43] To him "Arabic poetry is nearly devoid of that lofty outlook [to woman and love] which combines love with veneration and fondness with worship...that deep spiritual outlook which we only find in Aryan poets."[44]

Another thing he attacked was the poverty of Arab mythology. He

declared that he believed the Arabs to be poor in the art of mythology[45] and that whatever mythology they had was devoid of art and vividness.[46] In fact it was only an expression of their tendency to worship the dead.[47]

It is clear that al-Shābbi, in this lecture, is neither a scholar, a critic nor a thinker. He is a rebel, showing the characteristic of total rejection and total condemnation which true rebels show. At the basis of this rebellion is a strong desire to force a Romantic revolution on Tunisian poetry and his attempt seems to us now as an instinctive drive to throw grim doubts on everything which seemed to him to contradict it.

His rejection of the culture and the heritage of the whole Arab world and his extolling of Western poetic attributes[48] must have seemed harsh and unbearable to a people whose only weapon against a devastating foreign aggression and the forceful implementation of an alien culture was the loyalty and attachment they could give to their Islamic and Arab affinities. But how much of national pride and confidence had been broken already in these people is shown by al-Sanūsi's description of his own reaction to the lecture. He says "I left the place more worried than refreshed...I was even depressed and disturbed..."[49] But he goes on to say that he talked to many people about it and found they were all agreed in admiring the lecture, but that some of them suggested a different way of approach.[50] He then comments on al-Shābbi's courage saying that he "did not hesitate to shock us on many points which we held ideal and sacred..and on which we, indeed, never expected to hear anything but words of veneration and glorification."[51] Al-Sanūsi then goes on to say that when the extremity of his emotions died down and he found himself resorting to 'reason', he realised "that the worst thing that had happened to the East was the fossilisation of all elements of life."[52] Al-Sanūsi was one of the most active figures in the literary circles in Tunis at the time and editor of Al-ʿĀlam al-Adabi magazine, which published the bulk of Romantic literature in Tunisia.[53] The fact that many Tunisians regarded

al-Shābbi as a renegade and an atheist[54] cannot detract from the fact that this lecture was accepted, on an intellectual basis, by several educated men in Tunisia.[55]

This lecture cannot fail to astonish and shock the Arab reader even forty years later. His other ideas on poetry are milder and in line with the ideas and concepts which were being propagated in Egypt and al-Mahjar. He seems to be completely aware, in these articles, of the flux of diverse cultural influences on the Arab mind.[56] He is also aware of the psychological state of rejection of old ways and search for new ones in periods of change, a search which seeks to make links with the other cultures of the world.[57] On poetry he writes, "The great poet is able to harmonise emotion, imagination, thought, style and metre so that a musical rapport is found in the poem."[58] To him a "sincere artist is constricted to express in his art only the loftiest and noblest images of life."[59] Al-Shābbi then urges this artist to take his inspiration from all cultures of humanity, whether Arab or foreign.[60]

Some of his ideas are highly reminiscent of Nu'aimah. He says: "Poetry is life itself...in its beauty and ugliness, its silence and tumult...and in every colour and image..."[61]

He strongly attacked the shallowness of the poetry of his days and the perseverence of many poets in subjugating poetry to insincere topics such as eulogy, /formalised/ elegy, congratulations, etc.[62] This kind of poetry is separated from life, and at its best, when it takes on a social aspect, is similar to the speeches of preachers.[63]

In his poetry he also portrayed more attitudes towards the poetic concept. A poet must favour a life rich with feeling:

عش بالشعور وللشعور فانما ... دنياك كون عواطف وشعور
شيدت على العطف العميق وانها ... لتجفّ لو شيدت على التفكير [64]

He stresses the idea that the intellect kills art and is no match for the heart:

والعقل رغم مشيبه ووقاره ... ما زال في الايام جد صغير
وهو المهشم بالعواصف .. يا له ... من ساذج ،متفلسف ،مغرور

65

The poet, moreover, must open his heart wide to the flux of the universe and must explore the secrets of life.[66] A pantheistic attitude is clearly portrayed in his poem "Qalb al-Shā'ir" in which the poet's heart is wide enough to contain the whole of life and of death, too.[67]

Al-Shābbi was able to produce a poetry nearly equal to his theorisation of it, another phenomenon of this poet at a time when the poetic theory was far in advance of the poetic experiment, especially in authors like al-'Aqqād, Shukri, al-Māzini and Abū Shādi. Since the immediate poetic background in Tunisia was far behind the immediate poetic background of these other poets in Egypt,* one cannot but admire the leap al-Shābbi made to cross the divergent gap between the two backgrounds and bring his poetry up to the level of some of the best poetry that was being written in the Arab world at the time.

Al-Shābbi is one of the most brilliant minds to appear on the poetic stage in the first half of this century. Despite occasional structural weaknesses[68] and linguistic mistakes,[69] the over all picture is not greatly marred. These weaknesses and mistakes are not due only to the fact that al-Shābbi's poetic background in Tunisia had not attained a Classical mastery of expression which alone was able at the time to invest the poetic structure with strength, but was also due to al-Shābbi's Romantic adventure. He aimed at raising poetry to a contemporaneous level and he had to experiment first of all with language,[70] and to eliminate, as much as possible, the traditional use of stock words, phrases and images.[71] The poet

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* Middle Eastern poetic background was of course dominated by the neo-Classical contribution which arrived at great Classical purity at the hands of Shauqi.

succeeds, often, in introducing words hence rarely used in poetry in Tunisia.[72]

But it is with al-Shābbi's main attributes as a poet that this work is concerned. His structural weaknesses and occasional bad use of words were not of a kind that was bound to establish itself as a bad tradition in modern poetry, as did that of Shukri and Abū Shādi. Talking about al-Shābbi's greatness as a poet, Karrū fails to convince the reader of this greatness. He usually resorts to vague generalisations and when he tries to show his value as a poet, he limits his comment to an interpretation of meaning and a description of the emotional reaction of the reader.[73]

Like all avant garde poets of his generation, al-Shābbi showed diverse influences and an uncertain fluctuation of traditional motives, especially in his earlier verse. This was apparent as early as 1927 when Sanūsi wrote his book on modern Tunisian literature and collected several examples for each poet. He noticed that the traditional themes retained in al-Shābbi's poetry their traditional style with its stock images, diction and traditional form (especially the monorhyme).[74] Such traditional themes were fakhr,[75] and philosophic poetry, etc.[76] In his treatment of new themes, however, al-Shābbi is liberated from superfluous shackles and enjoys great freedom in his choice of diction.

Al-Shābbi's theme is quite diverse. Aside from the above mentioned conventional themes, which are less frequent in his work, he treats such themes as the glorification of poetry,[77] of childhood[78] and of motherhood,[79] to introspective meditations and Romantic reveries,[80] to poems of personal experience,[81] as well as to poems of negation, and rejection on the political and social levels.[82] The influence of Majhar poets such as Nu'aimah, Abū Mādi and Gibrān is especially seen in such poems as "Baqāya al-Kharīf",[83] "al-Zanbaqah al-Dhāwiyah"[84], "Munājat 'Uṣfūr"[85] in which a natural object like a flower or a bird is usually used symbolically as a comparative parallel to the poet's own experience. However, al-Shābbi

does not succeed in producing an allegory of such poems, and they remain, unfortunately, poems of ideas. In fact al-Shābbi has indulged in writing several poems in which he discussed an abstract idea.[86] These poems are among the least interesting of his poetic output because of their flatly direct approach, their prosaic analytic style and their lack of charged emotions.

Al-Shābbi's most remembered poem is perhaps "Irādat al-Ḥayāt",[87] but other poems such as "Nashīd al-Jabbār",[88] "al-Ṣabāḥ al-Jadīd",[89] "Fī Ẓill Wādı 'l-Maut",[90] "Ṣalawāt fī Haikal al-Ḥubb",[91] "al-Nabiyy al-Majhūl"[92] and others,[93] are also quite popular. In the minds of the Arabs nowadays it is the personality of the seer and the rebel that predominates over that of the suffering bard. This means that it is the positive and not the negative escapist aspect of his poetry which has won the greatest appeal over the years. For indeed his poetry had two conflicting sides to it. Firstly it was a positive force, like that of his teacher, Gibrān, which aimed at re-building this world anew.[94] However, Gibrān was able to persist in linking his Romanticism with positive forces perhaps mainly because he did not suffer the proximity of the society which he rejected and satarized. But al-Shābbi's social mindedness was occasionally blurred by two factors: firstly, by the proximity (often menacing)[95] of the society he was trying to re-awaken and re-mould, and secondly by the anguish of a prematurely tormented body in the grip of a fatal disease. His yearning for the Forest,[96] therefore, was not a yearning to a symbol that could unify life and solve the problem of human differences, incongruities and conflicts, as is the case with Gibrān, but was a deep yearning to escape from the world of conflict, social prejudice and general misery:

97 ليت لي ان اعيش في هذه الدنيا سعيدا بوحدتي وانفرادي
اصرف العمر في الجبال وفي الغابات بين الصنوبر الميّاد
. . . . . .
عيشة للجمال ،والفن ،ابغيها بعيدا عن امتي وبلادي

and this:

98 في الغاب ،الغاب الحبيب ،وانه حرم الطبيعة والجمال السامي
ظهرت في نار الجمال مشاعري ولقيت في دنيا الخيال سلامي
ونسيت دنيا الناس ،فهي سخافة سكرى من الاوهام والآثام

This is clearly not a call to simplicity and harmony directed to everyone, yone, but a refuge from everyone, an escape from the sordid and banal world.

Al-Shābbi is one of the first true exiles in modern Arabic poetry. A member of a whole generation of intellectual exiles,[99] he was able to depict with success in his poetry the state of spiritual and intellectual alienation of the Arab educated men of his time. Only a decade earlier Shukri, a great propagator in his critical articles of avant-garde poetry, was able to depict this state of alienation of the Arab intellectual of the second decade from society only in his prose,[100] his poetry remaining nearly completely out of the modern theme of rejection and alienation. Even among al-Shābbi's direct contemporaries the ills and maladies of society had not been able to impose a direct personal torment on the poet, except in very rare cases, and the poet often took on the personality of the preacher or teacher rather than the personality of the citizen who is felled down by those very maladies * he rejects.[101] Al-Shābbi's poetry of rejection is an excellent precedence to the more sophisticated poetry of exile and alienation that has been written in the fifties and sixties.

In al-Shābbi's poetry there is a complete liberation of emotion. He felt things deeply[102] and expressed them vividly. Despite the fact that his emotions were a predominant factor in his poetry,[103] his intellectual power often shines through the emotional maze:

104 ايها الشعب ؟ انت طفل صغير لاعب بالتراب والليل مفس
انت في الكون قوّة ،لم تسسها فكرة ،عبقرية ، ذات بأس

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* Gibrān's preaching had a tone of personal suffering in it. Tūqān had a hint of it, but only to an extent. Only al-Tall was able to depict (and to live) the role of the social rebel who suffers extremely through his rebellion. This, while poets like ʿUmar Abū Rīshah and ʿAlı Mahmūd Tāhā, despite their anger, remained integrated in their own background, a part of the 'great and glorious' façade of the nation, nothing to compare with the agonised consciousness of al-Shābbi's alienation.

A deep insight and intuition is revealed in this poetry and al-Shābbi remains one of the first modern Arab poets to have a vision which, although not sustained throughout his whole works, was mainly a vision of strength and love.[105] He based his dream of a victorious oppressed humanity on the idea of revolution:

106 حذار ،فتحت الرماد اللهيـــــب ومن يبـذر الشوك يجن الجـــــراح

The tyrants of the world will be swept away:

107 سيجرفك السيل ، سيل الدمـــــاء ويأكلك العاصـــف المشتعـــــل

He advocated great ideals: the will to live,[108] the veneration of woman and beauty,[109] love of life and progress. This has often taken in his poetry an ironical tone[110] or one of condemnation, even damnation.[111] Here the masses are:

112 لعب يحركها المطامع واللهـــــي وصغائر الاحقـــــاد والآراب
. . . . . .
موتى ،نسوا شوق الحياة وعزمهـــا وتحركـوا كتحـــرك الانصـــاب

Al-Shābbi's genuine concern in social progress springs from his own personal attitude and not from a reaction to imposed mass attitudes answering the call of literary commitment, as we have had in the poetry of many poets today. In fact al-Shābbi can be regarded as one of the very first spontaneously committed modern poets in the Arab world in this century. But this vision of strength very often gave way to gloomier attitudes. He wrote often of death, a death that was growing in his bones, in very beautiful verse. When addressing death, his accent often lies upon the futility of a life benighted by impossible dreams and unrequited aspirations:

113 الى الموت ان شئت عون الحيـــاة فخلف ظلام الردى ما تريـــــد

and this last stanza of one of his most beautiful poems:

114 ثم ماذا ؟ هذا انا عرت في الدنيا بعيدا عن لهوها وغناهـــــا
في ظلام الفناء ،ادفن اياّمـــي ولا استطيع حتى بكاهـــــا؟
وزهور الحياة تهـــوى بصمـــت محزن مضجر على قدميّـــــا
جفّ سحر الحياة ،ياقلبي الباكـــي فهياّ نجرب الموت هيـــــا

Nāzik al-Malā'ikah explains his word "nujarrib" as a wish on the poet's side to make of death not a passive act of surrender, but an act of the will carried out consciously,[115] "for the experience of death held for al-Shābbi all the strange pleasure and enticing mystery that vital experiences hold... he /often/ mentions death when he is speaking of life, beauty, youth, hope and spring...he believed that a complete and deep life cannot arrive at the peak of its consciousness and realisation until it merges with death."[116] This has a great element of truth in it. However, Nāzik al-Malā'ikah's further explanation that the feeling of death germinates from the poet's psychological devastation under the weight of the intense emotions that ruled his life[117] is far fetched. Al-Shābbi, like many true artists had an acute feeling of the vulnerability of beauty and life. The sight or experience of beauty brings to him immediately the realisation that neither love, nor happiness nor beauty can last, and when he feels that his happiness is perfect (as is the case when he loves and is loved)[118] he yearns for death because he feels that the present moment is a climax that is followed by a degeneration of the experience. Only death can protect it in its totality:

119 قد سكرنا بحبنا واكتفينا ... طفح الكأس فاذهبوا يا سقاة
نحن نحيا فلا نريد مزيدا ... حسبنا ما منحتنا يا حياة

ايها الدهر ،ايها الزمن الجاري ... الى غير وجهة وقرار
ايها الكون ، ايها الفلك الدوار ... بالفجر والدجى والنهار

ايها الموت ايها القدر الاعمى ... قفوا حيث انتم او فسيروا
ودعونا هنا ،تغنى لنا الاحلام ... والحبوا لوجود الكئيب

واذا ما ابيتم فاحملونا ... ولهيب الغرام في شفتينا
وزهور الحياة تعبق بالعطر ... وبالسحر والصبا في يدينا

This is one of the purest expressions of an intoxication with life and love rarely matched in modern Arabic poetry before the fifties and certainly unmatched by any of the poet's own contemporaries.[120] His poetry is studded with flashes of the metaphysical which immediately elevate it:

121
ان الحيـاة ـ وقد قضيت قبيل معرفـة الحيـاة ـ
بحر قرارته الردى ونشيـد لجتـه ،شكـاة
وعلى شواطئه القلوب تـئن داميـة عـراة

With poems like these al-Shābbi swung open new doors upon more universal themes in modern Arabic poetry. A new spirit is manifested and a capacity, only within the power of true poets, to use paradox in poetry effectively الكآبة المفـردة 122, اثـم مقـدس 123, and on an enchanting land: وجحيم توهج تحت فراديس كاحلام شاعر مجنـون 124 Indeed his image is often magnificently new and vivid:

125 وزهـور الحياة تهـوى بصمـت محزن مضجـر على قدميـا

and this:

126 والليالـي مضاور تلحـد اللحن وتقضـي على الصدى المسكـين

and this:

127 هكذا المخلـصون من كل صـوب رشقات الردى اليهم متاحـة

and this signifying death:

128 حملتـك غيلان الظـلام الـى الجبـال النائيـة

It can be quite sensuous at times. Talking of spring coming to earth he says:

129
وقبلهـا قبـلا في الشفـاه تعيـد الشباب الذى قـد غـبر

Al-Shabbi's poetry is a good example of the diverse use of imagery in a transitional period in literature. He uses a great deal of metaphor: ريـاح الوجـود 130, خضـم الحيـاة 131, كامـن الظـلام 132, زهـور الحيـاة 133 etc. and occasionally resorts to the more sophisticated symbols:

134 يا بـني امي ترى اين الصبـاح ؟ قد تقضّى العمر والفجـر بعيـد

But at the same time he uses a great number of similes, which is the simplest and most traditional use of image:

135 بالامس قد كانت حياتي كالسما الباسمة واليوم قد امست كاعماق الكهوف الواجمة

and this:

136 نحن مثل الربيع ،نمشي على ارض من الزهر والروى والخيال

and this:

137 عذبة انت كالطفولة ،كالاحلام كالحسن كالصباح الجديد
كالسما الضحوك كالليلة القمرا كالورد كابتسام الوليد

In fact al-Shābbi, in his original approach to poetry succeeded in changing the conventional poetic procedures. Poetry at his hands seemed free to be applied to almost any situation. This he has been able to achieve more through a change in tone, imagery and emphasis than through a radical change in the form of the poem. For the greatest number of his poems have kept to the conventional order of two hemistichs and a monorhyme. Other forms were the couplet, some three verse stanzas, quatrains, and other stanza forms including muwashshahs.[138]

Al-Shābbi's poetic idiom is often new and fascinating, but is not always sure, as we have seen. What characterises him most is his youthful energy.[139] His poems have a simple, rather fluid lyrical charm,[140] and there is hardly any rigidity, and very little pedantism. However, despite a successful change of the tone of poetry in several poems, there is an occasional falling back on an oratorial tone, a reminder of the deep impact of Classical rhetoric:

141 لك الويل يا صرح المظالم من غد اذا نهض المستضعفون وصمموا
اذا حطم المستعبدون قيودهم وصبوا . . . السخط ايان تملم

One of the greatest attributes of some of his poetry is its capacity to be interpreted in more than one way,[142] despite the fact that it is direct and clear. But this is not always achieved. Some poems, especially those with a direct social context, do not enjoy this quality. But when he discusses more personal topics, a new level is achieved. His

idealistic, rather sentimental treatment of the theme of Nature[143] is often superseded by a tragic tone of realisation and discovery of the incongruities and absurdities of life around him.

Even in his less successful poetry the unity of the poem is nearly always achieved. This is sometimes merely a unity of theme,[144] but he has been able, in several poems, to achieve an organic unity in which the poem develops to a climax, and its growth depends on all its components.[145]

But the Romantic adventure of al-Shābbi is not free from Romantic weaknesses. His gravest fault is flabbiness and most of his poems are diluted, some to the extreme.[146] Adjectives follow each other, often without restraint:

[147]

ويقضي صباح الحياة البديع ... وليل الوجود الرهيب العتيد
وعشت على الارض مثل الجبال ... جليلا رهيبا غريبا وحيد
تأمل ، فان نظام الحياة ... نظام دقيق ، بديع ، فريد

Moreover, he is immediately noted as a poet who does not polish his work:

[148]

وفي ليلة من ليالي الخريف ... مثقلة بالاسى والضجر

Nowadays al-Shābbi is best remembered, as has been said, for his poems which have a social or political connotation. When his only diwan Aghāni 'l-Hayat was published belatedly in 1955, it did not cause any real excitement in the literary circles. This fact is mentioned and commented upon by al-Shābbi's friend Muḥammad al-Ḥilaiwi.[149] He explains the tepid reception of the diwan in the Arab world by the fact that many of his poems were already known to the Arab reader, and that those as yet unknown were very similar to those previously published.[150] He also adds that the political situation in the Arab world had taken full hold of the people and had drawn them away from poetry.[151] Al-Ḥilaiwi,

however, overlooks the most probable reason for this tepid reception of the diwan. The mid-fifties were almost weaned from the Romantic spirit which permeated the diwan, and had little patience with or interest in the natural scene, the reveries, the meditative attitude and the special kind of ecstacy and suffering which most poems in the diwan reflect. It was an angry period, tuned to a more realistic approach. This was why al-Shābbi's poems of rejection appealed to it most. While Arab poets and readers of poetry in the twenties and thirties (and even in the forties) read the Western Romantics, Arab poets in the fifties were now reading the more modern poets of England, France, America, Spain and other countries of the East and West. This will be shown later on in this work. What is important here is the fact that poetic appreciation and the poetic taste had changed considerably since the thirties. Above all, the modern Arab poetic taste was more geared to an appreciation of a more revolutionary poetic form than al-Shābbi's poetry could present.

But this should not mean that there was no unnecessary and unjustifiable neglect of this most gifted poet, nor should it mean that the modern Arab reader can find nothing to benefit from al-Shābbi's contribution. Modern Arabic criticism has not shown particular interest in reviving recent forgotten poems of value. The greatest activity of critics is turned upon the contemporary contribution and poets like al-Shābbi, Abū Shabakah, al-Hamshari and many others are only revived on particular occasions[152] and not as a result of a critical exploration of recent poetic treasures.

The contemporary Arab reader can indeed find many poems in al-Shābbi's diwan which he can still enjoy.[153] A poem like "Alḥāni al-Sakrā", for example, with its universal approach, can hardly lose its beauty or appeal with time. The contemporary Arab poet can benefit a great deal from al-Shābbi's rhythmic flow, the depth and poignancy of his poetic sensibility, the riches of his emotion, the courage with which he approached the

poetic experiment and the originality and vividness of his imagery. Above all he can benefit from al-Shābbi's capacity of experiencing things in their totality and responding to them at many levels, including a metaphysical one, at the same time. Even up till now few poets in the Arab world can achieve this.

When judging him, critics must keep in mind the narrower dimensions of the poetic experiment at his time, and the extent which his own poetic adventure achieved in comparison to his contemporaries. They must also remember the short life-span allowed to him. If his genius was not able, within that tragically short life-span, to achieve a completion of the aesthetic message he seemed destined to fulfil, it should not be overlooked or allowed to be forgotten.

FOOTNOTES

1. Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad Karrū, however, insists that it was imperialism that severed the links between the Middle East and Tunisia; see Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu wa Shi'ruhu, Beirut, second edition, 1954, p.7. This is not plausible, because the Middle Eastern contribution was available to Tunisians ever since the nineteenth century, as has been discussed. Moreover, when Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbi attempted to make links with the Arab East, he was immediately hailed in Egypt. See M. Mandūr, "Al-Shābbi Rūḥ Thā'irah", in Dirāsāt 'an al-Shābbi, edited by A.M. Karrū, Tunis, 1966, p.95, for a comment by Mandūr on this.

2. It is impossible to illustrate here because of the abundance of examples, but a quick look on the selections will show these clearly. See also Khalīfah Muḥammad al-Tillīsi, in Al-Shābbi wa Gibrān, Tripoli, Libya, 1957, pp.25-6 where he quotes Muḥammad al-Ḥilaiwi, al-Shābbi's poet friend, as saying that Tunisian "poets are numerous but most of their poetry is of doubtful value... criticism will not find it difficult to uncover its shamness and prove its lack of feeling, emotion and imagination (except in very few cases) and to leave it - after a close scrutiny - merely a heap of words and metres."

   Al-Tillīsi himself, ibid., p.24, asserts that poetry in Tunisia, when al-Shābbi appeared, was poor and not fit to participate effectively in life. See also Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad Karrū, Kifāḥ al-Shābbi, Aw al-Sha'b wa 'l-Wataniyyah fī Shi'rih, third edition, Beirut, 1960, p.44.

3. Ibn 'Āshūr, Al-Harakah al-Adabiyyah wa 'l-Fikriyyah fī Tunis, I, 116.

4. For example see Sanūsi, Al-Adab al-Tūnisi fi 'l-Qarn al-Rābi' 'Ashar, I, 99, for examples from Sa'īd Abū Bakr (b.1899), pp.103-128; from Muḥammad al-Fāyiz, (b.1902), pp.155-156; from al-Hādi al-Madani, (b.1900), pp.170-172 and pp.177-181, etc.

5. Ibn 'Ashūr, op.cit., pp.147-148.

6. Ibid., pp.177-178.

7. For example see Sanūsi, op.cit., I, 99, on the influence of al-Mahjar on Sa'īd Abū Bakr; see also pp.114-115 for a poem by Abū Bakr entitled "al-Ghuṣn al-Mujarrad" which is a direct imitation of Nu'aima's poem "al-Nahr al-Mutajammid", in its Romantic notion, its simplified language, its treatment of the subject and its unity of theme.

8. See Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, p.9; and his book Kifāḥ al-Shābbi, p.43 and p.44.

9. Al-Shābbi, Shā'ir al-Ḥubb wa 'l-Ḥayāt, Beirut, 1960, p.57.

10. Some such poems are "Al-Nabiyy al-Majhūl", in his diwan Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, Cairo, 1955, pp.102-5; and his poem "Irādutu 'l-Ḥayāt", ibid. pp.167-170, etc.

11. Farrūkh agrees to this; see his essay "Al-Jānib al-Fikrī fī Shi'r al-Shābbi", Al-Fikr magazine, Tunis, April, 1966, p.110.

12. For a description of the state of society in Tunisia at al-Shābbi's time, see Karrū, Kifāḥ al-Shābbi, pp.76-89.

13. See the comments of Farrūkh on Gibrān and al-Shābbi's superiority to him in Al-Shābbi, p.103; see also "Al-Jānib al-Fikri fī Shi'r al-Shābbi", p.112 for another comment by Farrūkh on the bad influence of Gibrān on al-Shābbi's style.

14. Karrū, Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, p.72; see also the introduction to Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, p.10.

15. Karrū, Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, pp.45-6.

16. Ibid., p.46.

17. Farrūkh, Al-Shābbi, p.62.

18. Karrū, Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, loc.cit.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., p.47.

21. Ibid. On his life in al-Zaitūnah see Farrūkh's interesting description, Al-Shābbi, pp.63-5.

22. Karrū, Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, p.48.

23. Farrūkh, Al-Shābbi, p.65; the introduction to his diwan, p.10; Karrū, Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, pp.47-8. He is described by Karrū, p.48, as having read such great classics as Al-Aghāni, Ṣubḥ al-A'shā, Al-Kāmil, Al-Amāli, Al-'Umdah, Al-Mathal al-Sā'ir, Kitāb al-Ṣinā'atain, etc.

24. The introduction to his diwan, p.10; Farrūkh, Al-Shābbi, p.65; see also Rasā'il al-Shābbi, edited by Muḥammad al-Ḥilaiwi, Tunis, 1966, in which several discussions on contemporary Arabic literature in the Arab world are carried out between al-Shābbi and his poet friend M. al-Ḥilaiwi in natural and spontaneous fashion. See for example pp.34, 46, 58, 60, 61, 82, 123, 127-8, 133 et passim.

25. Karrū, Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, p.72.

26. Farrūkh, Al-Shābbi, p.65.

27. Karrū, Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, p.47; Farrūkh, Shā'irān Mu'āṣirān, pp.170-1; Khalīfah M. al-Tillīsi, Al-Shābbi wa Gibrān, pp.20-1. See also al-Shābbi's poem "Qalb al-Umm" in Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, pp.129-133, which is reminiscent (especially on pp.131-2) of Nu'aimah's poem "Ibtihālāt", Hams al-Jufūn, pp.32-7, especially the overture; also al-Shābbi's poem "Fī Ẓill Wādī 'l-Maut", Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, pp.141-3, which is reminiscent, in its meditative atmosphere, of Abū Māḍi's poem, "Al-Ṭalāsim", Al-Jadāwil, pp.139-177.

28. See especially pp.51-66.

29. Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, pp.47 & 70-7.

30. See for example his early assessment of Apollo in a letter to Muḥammad al-Ḥilaiwi on February 22, 1933, Rasā'il al-Shābbi, pp.100-1.

31. Zain al-'Ābidin al-Sanūsi, op.cit., I, 207; Karrū, Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, p.48.

32. Karrū, ibid; In fact these two authors are quoted by al-Shābbi in his lecture "Al-Khayāl al-Shi'ri 'Ind al-'Arab", published in book form by Zain al-'Ābidīn al-Sanūsi in 1929. See Al-Khayāl al-Shi'ri 'Ind al-'Arab, second edition, Tunis, 1961, pp.64 and 65 for al-Shābbi's mention of Lamartine and pp.65 and 66 for his mention of Goethe.

33. This is perhaps why Rajā' al-Naqqāsh, a modern Egyptian critic, regards al-Shābbi as the "most prominent Arab poet before the second World War to insist on the necessity of innovation"; see his book Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbi, Iqra' series, Cairo, 1962, p.34.

34. Karrū, Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, pp.48-9; Farrūkh, Al-Shābbi, pp.72-4.

35. Ibid, pp.66-7; Karrū, Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, p.89; see also Al-Fikr magazine, op.cit., for an article by Aḥmad Khālid entitled "Al-Shābbi wa 'l-Mar'ah", pp.38-9.

36. Farrūkh, Al-Shābbi, p.68; see also Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt for poems probably relating to this relation; see for example "Al-Jannatu al-Ḍā'i'ah", pp.147-150; "Jadwal al-Ḥubb", pp.69-72; "al-Dhikrā", pp.53-4; "Ma'tam al-Ḥubb", pp.20-21. In his diary there is also a mention of that flower which life gave to him then took away from him; Mudhakkarāt Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbi, Tunis, 1966, pp.8-9.

37. Karrū, Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, pp.49 & 50.

38. Al-Khayāl al-Shi'ri, p.103.

39. Ibid, p.107.

40. Ibid, pp.122-3. However, although the rhetorical tone is present in much of the Classical poetry, the example he gives to prove that many poems are 'versified oratories' is quite unsuccessful. This is a famous pre-Islamic poem by al-Ḥārith bin 'Abbād which he said before the famous Basūs war when al-Muhalhil killed his son Buhair. The amount of emotion involved in the famous lāmiyyah, the repetitive, highly impressive style, the charged, concise verses are highly poetic. Moreover, many of the images are most appropriate to good poetry:

يا بجير الخيرات ،لا صلح حتى نملأ البيد من رؤوس الرجال

اصبحت وائل تعج من الحرب عجيج الجمال بالاثقال

and this:

يا بني تغلب خذوا الحذر انا قد شربنا بكأس موت زلال

and this:

قربا مربط النعامة مني لقحت حرب وائل عن حيال

and this:

ربّ جيش ، لقيته ،يمطر الموت على عيكل خفيف الجلال

See ibid, pp.125-6 where the poem is quoted, and pp.126-7 for his assessment of it.

41. Al-Khayāl al-Shi'ri, p.113.

42. Ibid, p.67.

43. Ibid, p.72.

44. Ibid. Again al-Shābbi chooses one of the most effective love poems in the Classical heritage, that of Ibn Zuraiq:

لا تعذليه فان العذل يولعه قد قلت حقا ولكن ليس يسمعه

(p.144 and after) and accuses it of tepidity (p.116) and lack of authenticity (p.117). It is very difficult to understand al-Shābbi's attack on this poem which is very rich in emotion and might be regarded a superior poem from many points of view.

45. Ibid, p.31.

46. Ibid, p.33.

47. Ibid, p.34.

48. For his extolling of Western literature see Al-Khayāl al-Shi'ri, pp.31, 33. 39, 41, 65-7, 72, 109, 114, 116-9 and other places.

49. Ibid., p.13.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., p.14.

52. Ibid.

53. See M.F. Ghāzi, "Kaifa Nadrus al-Shābbi?", Dirāsāt 'an al-Shābbi, p.19.

54. Naqqāsh, op.cit., p.33; Karrū, Kifāḥ al-Shābbi, p.49; for more details on the reaction of the audience to this lecture see al-Munji al-Shamli, "Al-Khayāl al-Shi'ri 'Ind al-'Arab, 'Aqīdah Adabiyyah wa Ijtimā'iyyah Siyāsiyyah", Al-Fikr magazine, April 1966, pp.23-4.

55. For more on this lecture see Karrū, Kifāḥ al-Shābbi, pp.13-28; see also an article by the Lebanese Shauqi Abī Shaqrā, "Al-Khayāl al-Shi'ri 'Ind al-'Arab, li Abī 'l-Qāsim al-Shābbi," Dirāsāt 'an al-Shābbi, pp.151-4; al-Tillīsi, op.cit., pp.17-9; Farrūkh, Al-Shābbi, pp.128-9.

56. See his introduction to Abū Shādi's diwan, Al-Yunbū', "Ilmāmah fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi fi 'l-'Aṣr al-Ḥāḍir", republished in Āthār al-Shābbi wa Sadāhu fi 'l-Sharq, Beirut, 1961, which is a collection of writings by al-Shābbi and on him, ed. by Abū 'l-Qāsim M. Karrū, p.115.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid., p.122.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid., pp.122-3.

61. Ibid., p.130; from an article entitled "Al Shi'r, ma yajibu an yufhama minhu wa mā huwa miqyāsuhu 'l-ṣaḥīḥ", published originally in Al-'Ālam al-Adabi, magazine, 1930, see ibid., p.24.

62. Ibid., p.140, from an article entitled "Al-Shi'r wa 'l-Shā'ir", originally published in Al-'Ālam al-Adabi, 1932; see ibid., p.24.

63. Ibid., p.141.

64. Aghāni l-Ḥayāt, p.127.

65. Ibid., p.128.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid., p.183.

68. For a single example this extract from his poem "Ughniyyat al-Shā'ir", in Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, p.64:

ورتلي حول بيت الحزن اغنية — تجلو عن النفس، احزان الاعاصير
فان قلبي قبر مظلم قفرت — فيه الاماني فما عادت تغنيني
لولاك في هذه الدنيا لما لمست — اوتار روحي اصوات الاغانيين
ولا تلفيت مأخوذا ... ولا عذبت — لي الحياة لدى غض الرياحين

See also Farrūkh, Al-Shābbi, pp.122-3.

69. See ibid., pp.118-121, where Farrūkh gives a list of his linguistic mistakes. However, Farrūkh is over-pedantic in his criticism and gives no allowance in his criticism for the modern use of words such as "malāk" instead of "malak" (p.119) and "al-kaun" meaning world instead of "al-'Ālam" (ibid), "zuhūr" instead of "zahr" which is a modern usage (ibid); "Mashā'ir" (ibid) and "aḥāsīs" (ibid., p.120).

70. Farrūkh rightly links these mistakes with al-Shābbi's wish to innovate (ibid, p.118). However, one might disagree with him as to the reason, for he seems to refer it completely to al-Shābbi's intent to avoid highly Classical or Islamic words and pick instead pagan or vulgar words. (Ibid.)

71. He was not always very successful, as in the following when he uses the word 'بدر'

فقدت قلبا همه ان يستوى في الافق بدرى

Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, p.96. He also uses many archaic words such as 'عرصات صدرى' (p.97) and 'ورود' for lions (p.132). etc.

72. See Sharārah, Al-Shābbi, Beirut, 1961, pp.10-11 where he gives a list of these words. See also Sanūsi, op.cit., Volume I, 204, where he says that his vocabulary was widened by the new meanings embodied in his poetry. This is a correct and indeed a very modern evaluation by al-Sanūsi; see also Naqqāsh, op.cit., p.91.

73. Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, pp.78-88.

74. Sanūsi, op.cit., pp.203-4.

75. See his poems "al-Majd" and "Sir ma'a al-Dahr", in Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, p.52. "Za'īr al-'Āṣifah", ibid, p.42 etc.

76. See his poem "Min Ḥadīth al-Shuyūkh", ibid, p.14; Perhaps his most conventional poem is "Gharfah min Yamm", ibid, p.17. The poem is made up of fourteen verses where the unity of the one verse is strictly kept. Nearly each verse is a wise saying dogmatically delivered and contained within the single verse. The following are an example:

ضعف العزيمة لحد في سكينته ... تقضي الحياة ،بناه اليأس والوجل
وفي العزيمة قوات مسخرة ... يخر دون مداها الشامخ الجبل
والناس شخصان ، ذا يسعى به قدم ... من القنوط وذا يسعى به الامل

This poem was written in part before 1927, for it is included in Sanūsi's collection, op.cit., p.238 where it has a different title "Al-Amal wa 'l-Qunūṭ" and is only limited to eight verses. The poet must have completed it later on.

77. Such poems as "Shi'ri" in Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, pp.33-4; "Yā Shi'r", ibid, pp.35-41; "Qultu li 'l-Shi'r", ibid, pp.86-7; "Aḥlām Shā'ir", ibid, 114-115; "Fikrat al-Fann", ibid, pp.127-8; "Qalb al-Shā'ir", ibid, p.183, etc.

78. See his poem "al-Ṭufūlah", ibid, p.57.

79. See his poem "Qalb al-Umm", ibid, pp.129-133, and "Ḥaram al-Umūmah", ibid, p.182.

80. Some such poems are "Ayyuha 'l-Lail", ibid, pp.25-28; "al-Ka'ābah al-Majhūlah", ibid, pp.22-24; "al-Masā' al-Ḥazīn", ibid, pp.59-61, etc.

81. Some such poems are "al-Dhikrā", ibid, pp.53-4; "Jadwal al-Ḥubb", pp.69-72; "Ṣalawāt fī Haikal al-Ḥubb", ibid, pp.121-124; "Yā Maut", pp.95-97; "Aghāni 'l-Tā'ih", ibid, pp.89-90; "Fī Ẓill Wādī 'l-Maut", ibid, pp.141-143; "Alḥāni al-Sakrā", ibid, pp.165-166; "al-Ṣabāḥ al-Jadīd", ibid, pp.159-161; "Nashīd al-Jabbār", ibid, pp.179-181 etc.

82. Some such poems are "Shakwā 'l-Yatīm", pp.29-30; "Ilā 'āzif A'mā". Ibid, pp.78-80; "al-Nabiyy al-Majhūl" , ibid, pp.102-5; "Irādat al-Ḥayāt," ibid, pp.167-170; "Ila 'l-Sha'b", ibid, pp.175-178, etc.

83. Ibid, pp.62-63.

84. Ibid, pp.31-32.

85. Ibid, pp.55-56.

86. Such as "Al-Sa'āmah", ibid., p.44; "Al-Ḥubb", p.45; "Al-Sa'ādah", p.151, etc.

87. Ibid., pp.167-170. See Karrū, Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, p.32; Āthār al-Shābbi, p.57, where he quotes a personal letter from M. Nu'aimahwhich mentions the fame of this poem; see also ibid., p.45; Farrūkh in Shā'irān Mu'āsirān, p.214 calls it "mu'allaqat" al-Shābbi.

88. Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, pp.179- 31.

89. Ibid., pp.159-61.

90. Ibid., pp.141-3.

91. Ibid., pp.121-4.

92. Ibid., pp.102-5.

93. See Karrū, Āthār al-Shābbi, pp.41-2.

94. In such poems as "Irādutu 'l-Ḥayāt", "Ila 'l-Sha'b" and "Al-Nabiyyu 'l-Majhūl"; etc.

95. See Naqqāsh, op.cit., p.88.

96. See his poems "Aḥlām Shā'ir", in Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, p.114; "Quyūd al-Aḥlām", ibid., pp.115-6; and "Al-Ghāb", pp.188-91 etc.

97. Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, p.114.

98. Ibid., pp.190-91.

99. J. Berque in a short address at the festival of al-Shābbi at Tunis, (March, 1966), Al-Fikr magazine, April, 1966, p.153.

100. In his book I'tirāfāt; see above, pp.281 and 283.

101. On his rejection compare with Naqqāsh, op.cit., pp.36-47; Tillīsi, op.cit., p.56; Karrū, Kifāh al-Shābbi, pp.44, 57 and 68.

102. Shauqi Ḍaif in Dirāsāt fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āṣir, pp.50-64, discusses al-Shābbi's capacity of deep and acute emotion, but emphasises only the poet's feelings of 'pain'. Al-Shābbi's poignant love of beauty, and his reactions of anger, frustration and strong condemnation are neglected. The same attitude to the kind of emotion released in al-Shābbi's poetry is found also in Mūsā Sulaimān's article on his poetry, "Shi'r Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Shābbi, Thaurah wa Ghurbah - Dirāsat Taḥlīl wa Taqyīm", Al-Abḥāth magazine, March 1966, XIX, i, 124-43; also in Su'ād Abū Shaqra's article, "Shā'ir al-Ālām", Al-Ādāb magazine, June, 1953, pp.30-2 and pp.64-5. Farrūkh, "Al-Jānib al-Fikri fī Shi'r al-Shābbi" in Al-Fikr magazine, op.cit., p.110, asserts that his emotionalism took him away from logic and nearer to intuition. The best interpretation of al-Shābbi's emotions was given by Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, Qadāyā, pp.276-80.

103. This is an element of his poetry which also coincides with his theory of it. See Al-Khayāl al-Shi'ri, pp.116-9.

104. Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, p.103.

105. See Naqqāsh, op.cit., pp.98-9.

106. Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, p.185, from his poem "Ilā Ṭughāt al-'Ālam".

107. Ibid.

108. As in his poems "Nashīd al-Jabbār" and "Irādatu 'l-Ḥayāt".

109. See his poems "Ilā 'Adhārā Afrūdīt", ibid., pp.109-11; "Ṣalawāt fī Haikal al-Ḥubb", etc.

110. See for example his poem "Ilā 'l-Sha'b".

111. This appears in many poems. For a single example see his poem "Al-Nabiyyu 'l-Majhūl".

112. Ibid., p.184.

113. Ibid., p.76.

114. Ibid., p.143.

115. Qadāyā, pp.270-1.

116. Ibid., p.271.

117. Ibid., pp.276-280.

118. See his poems "Alḥāni al-Sakrā", Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, pp.165-166; "Taḥta 'l-Ghuṣūn", ibid., pp.171-174, especially p.172 etc.

119. Ibid., p.166. Farrūkh, strangely, could not accept al-Shābbi's many-sided interpretation of life and death and has a most mundane and practical explanation of it; Al-Shābbi, 211-221.

120. Al-Hamshari, whom N. al-Malā'ikah in the same essay seems to regard as equal in this respect to al-Shābbi, was in fact less conscious of death as a personal experience. In his "Shāṭi' al-A'rāf" death seems to be more of an idea than a passion.

121. Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, p.129; see also p.173; also his poems "al-Ṣabāḥ al-Jadīd", pp.159-161; "al-Jannatu 'l-Ḍā'i'ah", pp.147-150; "Fī Ẓill Wādī 'l-Maut", ibid., pp.141-143; "Alḥāni al-Sakrā".

122. Ibid., p.22.

123. Ibid., p.173.

124. Ibid., p.172.

125. Ibid., p.143.

126. Ibid., p.15.

127. Ibid., p.13.

128. Ibid., p.130.

129. Ibid., p.169. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Farrūkh calls him a pagan poet, see "Al-Jānib al-Fikri fī Shi'r al-Shābbi", p.114.

130. Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt, p.100.

131. Ibid.

132. Ibid., p.178.

133. Ibid., p.166.

134. Ibid., p.89. His poem "al-Ṣabāḥ al-Jadīd" is perhaps the best example of a more subtle use of symbol in his poetry.

135. Ibid., p.69.

136. Ibid., p.165, but notice the fine metaphorical use of images in the rest of the verse.

137. Ibid., p.121.

138. It is interesting to note that the muwashshaḥ form has been revived greatly by several Tunisian poets. See Sanūsi, op.cit., I, for scattered examples of these some of which are on pp.128, 150-2, 155, 177-8, etc. See also Farrūkh, Al-Shābbi, p.149.

139. For Mandūr's comment see his essay, "Al-Shābbi Rūḥ Thā'irah", Dirāsāt 'an al-Shābbi, p.98.

140. Two of the best examples of this are his poems "Fī Ẓill Wādī 'l-Maut" and "Alḥāni al-Sakrā".

141. Aghāni 'l-Hayāt, p.43. The last hemistich has one word missing in the text.

142. A good example of this is his poem "Al-Ṣabāḥ al-Jadīd". I.Y. Bullāṭah believes that al-Shābbi wrote it at a moment when he was free from pain, see Al-Rūmāntīqiyyah wa Maʿālimuhā fi 'l-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi 'l-Ḥadīth, Beirut, 1960, pp.173-4; S. Ḍaif believes that al-Shābbi wrote it with a feeling of hatred for life and a wish to be delivered from his pain through death, see Dirāsāt fi 'l-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi 'l-Muʿāsir, p.64. However, Muṣṭafā Badawi has a more interesting interpretation, for to him al-Shābbi had a metaphysical image of a morning coming to man through death; it is not the wish to be delivered from pain but the faith that death is the morning of man's existence, see his essay "Al-Taqrīr wa 'l-Iḥā' fī Shiʿr al-Shābbi", Dirāsāt ʿan al-Shābbi, pp.216-7; Nāzik al-Malā'ikah relates this poem to al-Shābbi's perpetual enchantment with death, seen also in many other poems, see Qadāyā, p.272; a nationalistic explanation of the poem is indicated by the fact that it was chosen as one in a collection of nationalistic poems by al-Shābbi and others in Rawa'iʿ Mukhtārah min al-Shiʿr al-Qaumi, Baghdad, [c.1950], pp.13- 5; see also Farrūkh, Shāʿirān Muʿāṣirān, p.192 where he says that a "new morning" indicates the advent of a new love instead of the old and unhappy attachment he had.

143. For a single example see his poem "Ṣalawāt fī Haikal al-Ḥubb"; see also Tillīsi, op.cit., pp.85-6.

144. Such as his poem "Naẓratun li 'l-Ḥayāt", Aghāni 'l-Hayāt, pp.15-6.

145. An excellent example of this is his poem "Alḥāni al-Sakrā".

146. See Aghāni 'l-Hayāt, p.168 and 171 etc., for examples of extreme dilution.

147. Ibid., pp.136-8.

148. Ibid., p.168, where "Muthaqqalatun" is wrong and could have been easily replaced.

149. "Naẓarāt fī Dīwān Aghāni 'l-Ḥayāt", Al-Fikr magazine, April, 1966, pp.116-7.

150. Ibid., p.117.

151. Ibid.

152. Al-Shābbi, for example, was revived as a result of a patriotic effort on the part of his countrymen; see the introduction to Karrū's book Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu, especially pp.12- 4, see also Al-Fikr magazine, April, 1966, the preface.

153. Naqqāsh, op.cit., pp.92-95, discusses the contemporary attitude towards al-Shābbi's poetry and decides that he finds his poetry too idealistic to suit the basically realistic attitude of contemporary Arabs. This is true, of course, of much of his poetry, but a selective approach to it can find several universal examples.

SECTION 3: ABŪ SHABAKAH OF LEBANON

A poet whose practice was equal to his theory[1] was Ilyās Abū Shabakah (1903-1947). He started writing in the twenties, the same decade in which two other avant-garde Lebanese poets were writing. These were Adīb Maẓhar (1898-1928) and Yūsuf Ghuṣūb (1893). The appearance of these two poets is the earliest phenomenon in the Arab world of a change of poetic sensibility towards a Symbolism of the French nineteenth century type. This trend and the achievement of its major poets will be discussed in the following chapter. Lebanese writers and poets in the twenties were reading Western literature, mostly French.[2] Some poets were influenced by the French Romantics. Among those Abū Shabakah was the most eminent. He was so Romantic that he repudiated the Symbolic experiment in Lebanon in its core.[3] But other poets read the French Symbolists.[4] It is a rather astonishing phenomenon that the two trends, in their full expression, appeared simultaneously in Lebanon. However, the circumstances surrounding the appearance of Symbolism in Lebanon will be discussed in the following chapter. One last observation to keep in mind now before discussing Abū Shabakah's poetry is that the thirties, which saw Abū Shabakah's rise to fame and importance, as a staunch Romantic, also saw the simultaneous rise of another poet in Lebanon of equal fame and importance who was destined to be the foremost protagonist of the Symbolist experiment in modern Arabic poetry, Sa'īd 'Aql.

Ilyās Abū Shabakah was a corner-stone in modern Arabic poetry in Lebanon and is undoubtedly one of the greatest modern Arab poets.[5] Not only the Romantic current in modern Arabic poetry was greatly re-enforced by his diversified contribution, but also the Christian literary tradition in Arabic. This tradition, which was now already entrenched in modern Arabic poetry because of the Gibrānian experiment, found great confirmation

in Abū Shabakah's work. He expounded it in two spheres: firstly by using Biblical stories and traditions as direct themes, and secondly by indirect reference and the delineation of the experience of a Christian who felt deeply about the teachings of the Catholic Church. This will be expounded presently.

Abū Shabakah was reared in the Lebanese village of Dhouq Mikhā'il in Kasarwān,[6] a part of the Mediterranean coast noted for its beauty. His mother seems to have come from a family well known for its poetic gift, for both her maternal uncle and her brother were recognised poets in their community.[7] She herself was educated at 'Aintūrah Girls' School.[8] As for his father there seems to have been a strong bondage of love between the poet in his childhood and his father,[9] until that father was murdered when the child was ten years old.[10] This tragedy left a very great impact on the poet.[11] He entered the well known boys school of 'Aintūrah[12] in 1911, but because of the intervention of the first World War he did not finish school except in 1922.[13] It was at this preparatory school that Abū Shabakah discovered his love for literature. Information about his readings in Arabic literature is vague, and his main biographer, Razzouq, conjectures that he read the Umayyad love poets[14] and al-Ma'arri.[15] At any rate, there can be no doubt that he must have read a great deal of Arabic poetry, old and new, for his style shows a strength which must have depended on very firm roots of language and poetic education. Moreover, the influence of Mahjar poetry in the North is also seen in his earlier work and is perceived by most writers on him.[16] As for his French education it is certain that this was followed strongly during his school years, under the guidance of an eminent French priest who was the principal of the school.[17] Abū Shabakah's deep admiration for and critical outlook on French literature are well shown in his small but interesting book entitled Rawābit al-Fikr wal-Rūh baina 'l-'Arab wal-Firanjah. In French he read mostly drama, poetry and novels,[18] and translated a fair amount.[19] He

also read other literatures which were translated into French such as the Iliad, the Aeniad, Milton's Paradise Lost , Dante's Divine Comedy and others.[20] As a result of this extensive reading he was able to write many articles introducing these writers and poets to the Arab reader, which he published in the most prominent Lebanese periodicals of the thirties, Al-Ma'rid and Al-Jumhūr.

Another apparently great source of his culture was the Bible, which he read avidly in his youth.[21] He was aware of the influence of the Bible on other Great European poets[22] and called on Arab poets to read the "Divine treasures" of some of the books of the Bible such as Deuteronomy, the Song of Songs and the Book of Job.[23]

Abū Shabakah's life seems to have been afflicted by misfortunes right from his childhood, for suddenly, after the father's death, the family found themselves poor.[24] After his school days he tried to find a job but his efforts were thwarted,[25] and he resorted to teaching[26] only to leave it for journalism. His work in journalism was diversified, for he wrote on politics, social life and literature, as well as on his personal experiences.[27] However, journalism never brought him enough money and for the greater part of his life he was needy.[28] This and other unfortunate experiences created in him a deep resentment against people and the world. He is described as having been hypersensitive, of a very proud nature.[29] He also seems to have been irritable and hot tempered.[30] But despite this nervous sensitivity Abū Shabakah was basically gentle, sociable and magnanimous.[31]

Abū Shabakah published seven volumes of poetry in his lifetime. These are Al-Qaithārah (1926), Al-Marīd al-Sāmit (1928), Afā'i 'l-Firdaus (1938), Al-Alhān (1941), Nidā' al-Qalb (1944), Ghalwā' (1945) and Ila 'l-Abad (1945). A posthumous volume entitled Min Ṣa'īd al-Ālihah was published in 1959. It is noticeable that most of the poetry of two of his volumes, Afā'i 'l-Firdaus and Ghalwā' had been written many years before its publication in book form.

It is impossible to tell the story of this poet without discussing, as far as it is possible, his private life. For Abū Shabakah's poetry revolved around his emotional experiences and delineated them, often with great accuracy. It is unfortunate that neither Razzouq F. Razzouq his biographer, nor other writers on him have furnished us with enough data to build a complete picture, and one has to resort to what material is available and to draw inferences from his poetry, until some more accurate study be made of him and his life.

From his poetry and from what has been written on him we know that there have been four women in his life who played major roles in his experience. His first love was Olga Sarophīm whom he called "Ghalwā'" in his poetry.[32] She remained engaged to him for many years and then married him in 1931.[33] They never had children, but a child was still-born to them.[34] Olga is in part the tormented, suffering heroine of Ghalwā'.

The second woman in his life was a married woman from his own village, whom the poet knew in 1929 and whom he loved at the beginning in platonic fashion. However, the relationship between them developed into a carnal involvement which caused great anguish to the poet.[35] It will be discussed later how he reacted in his poetry to this devastating experience. It is not known how long his relationship with her lasted. Razzouq says it lasted until 1934.[36] However, from the poet's notes we are led to conclude that it only lasted for some months, for he dates the end of his relationship with her as the same date of one of his poems, which is 1929.[37] She is the beguiling snake-heroine of Afā'i 'l-Firdaus, which he published in 1938.

The third woman to enter his life was a singer who seems to have had a calming and purifying influence on him.[38] However, she does not seem to have played in his life as large a part as his other women. The poems he wrote about her are not all known, for in his volume Nidā' al-Qalb

which he published in 1944, only one poem can be judged to have been written on her, as will be shown presently.

It is with Laila, his last woman that his experience of love is deepened and enriched. She seems to have been the answer to everything the poet wanted; beauty, chastity, sincerity, Romantic idealism and a fine literary taste.[39] He met her, it seems in 1940,[40] a few years after he parted with the singer,[41] and their relationship lasted probably until his death.[42]

He died of leukaemia[43] at the premature age of forty-four. His life was a mixture of bliss and misery. He surely did not deserve his poverty, his father's early death, his perpetual struggle for subsistence in the particular society of Lebanon at the time, the leukaemia which devoured him. But he was compensated very greatly by love. So many women were caught for ever by that particular charm which catches the heart in his poetry, by his absolute sincerity, by the passionate purity of his emotions. And he had so many friends, caught also for ever by his candour, his sensitivity, his capacity to forgive.[44] He is one of the most interesting and charming literary figures in Arab literary history. The story of his life and its effects on his great poetic contribution still awaits a writer who will unravel the secrets of this life and, with creativity and diligence, gather its threads and draw its contours.

At the beginning of the thirties Abū Shabakah formed, with a few literary friends, a literary circle which they called "'Uṣbat al-'Ashrah". Only four of the ten members of this group seem to have been really active,[45] the others staying on as supporters only.[46] This group of writers were literary iconoclasts who waged their war on every traditional man of letters and on every imitator.[47] They believed in criticism as a means of serving Arabic literature and they consequently faced a strong assault from the people they attacked in their campaign.[48] Their platform and mouthpiece was Al-Ma'rid newspaper.[49]

Abū Shabakah the critic did not limit himself to the boundaries of a defined concept of poetry. In his introduction to Afā'i 'l-Firdaus he declared that poetry cannot be defined, for it is an organic being that cannot be measured by theories which only live on the margin of literature and have nothing to do with the essence. Poetry is an expression of life and life has no definite identity, and no definite situations or boundaries, but is wider than all of these.[50] He also declared that it would be unfortunate if the critics insisted on a definite theory of literature,[51] and asked the critics to leave poets free to deduce their experiences from their own lives.[52]

Abū Shabakah spoke of the artist having an inner knowledge of outside things, of his capacity to realise the outer world through the senses, a precedence to the more modern idea of intuition as an important element in the poetic experience. Abū Shabakah does not mention the word 'intuition' precisely, but expresses the same meaning when he says that "the longing for the unknown becomes central in the human mind when man is convinced that his physical knowledge of the outside world does not uncover for him the truth about the things he sees and touches, and has to admit that his inner knowledge is nothing but the impression of an outside cause whose essence he ignores."[53] Again he asks "How can one know what cannot be realised [by the mind] but can only be felt? ... Is it not outrageous to try to define the language of metaphor, of the spirit, of deep inner feelings with the language of definitions and rules?"[54]

He also spoke of the disappointing effect of the constantly changing face of life, an effect which brings about the realisation that it is useless to search for the absolute truth ... a realisation which fills the heart with depression. "This is the reason," he exclaimed, "for the deep pessimism of poets."[55]

He himself does not seem to realise that he is talking here of artistic intuition and not of poetic inspiration as such, for he mistakes

the one for the other.[56] His description above applies, not to the temporary feeling of inspiration poets feel at the moments of creation, but to a general and nearly permanent attitude of the artist whose senses are sharper than those of the ordinary person and whose inner promptings give him a glimpse of knowledge which is irrational and deeply intuitive. This sort of vigilant intuitive state gives artists their own attitude to the world and to life, and their emotional temperament. And this is what Abū Shabakah was describing above. As for inspiration, which he goes on to describe later, without differentiating between it and intuition, it does fall into a different sphere, and has to do directly with the act of creation. While many people with an artistic temperament do have an intuitive nature, only real poets know the state of inspiration which prompts creativity. It is, as C.M. Bowra says, an all absorbing state of mind in which a poet forgets anything outside the immediate object of his vision, and loses his sense of time.[56] This condition is strikingly positive,[57] and gives a great feeling of joy.[58] The poet's whole being is enlarged and he is able to enjoy an unprecedented completeness which, in his ordinary life, he enjoys only in fragments with after-thoughts and misgivings and distractions.[59]

Abū Shabakah calls this effect the effect of a superhuman power and the poet is nothing but a means to it.[60] But this power is the essence of the poet's spirit,[61] and it is in this essence that objects merge together, helped to this by all the senses. Abū Shabakah rejects the idea that the poet can write when he wants.[62] He also rejects the idea that the poet can choose the words of the poem, for his rich outpourings of emotions prevent him from toying with words.[63] Poetry in his opinion, is inspired in its complete form, which must not be altered. The words are formed [in the mind of the poet] by the unified work of our spiritual elements, and they therefore do not cost us much effort.[64] This view, held by some other Romantics before him such as Shelley for example,[65] holds the danger that by "stressing the extraordinary powers of inspiration we may underestimate

the obligations which it puts on the poet and the efforts which it demands of him",[66] in polishing and perfecting his work.[67]

To Abū Shabakah music in poetry is only one element among several other equally important elements. Meaning in a poem must not be inferior to music, nor image to meaning.[68] The harp of the poet is Nature, he insists.[69] However, he also insists that a poet must be the image of his age.[70]

He also attacked obscurity in poetry which the Symbolists seemed to accept and rationalise. They were to him mere imitators of Mallarmé and the French Symbolic school and had no real excuse for such obscurity in Arabic poetry.[71] It is astonishing how Abū Shabakah, although he accepted the Mahjar or say the Gibranian experiment with some willingness,[72] never accepted or understood the Lebanese Symbolic school. To him this school "did not live long and did not produce any remarkable work".[73] The poems of Adīb Mazhar [in the mid-twenties] he insisted, were the beginning of an accursed period of Symbolic poetry, which flourished in the thirties.[74]

Abū Shabakah's greatest achievement as a critic was not in his idea on inspiration which is in fact a well-known idea in all literatures, but in his relentless attacks, carried out with directness and courage, on traditionalism and shamness in literature. He and his friends tried to clear the field from intruders on the art of poetry and literature in general. But he was a far greater poet than a critic. He was not able, throughout his relatively short life, to realise in the words of the critic the real depth and importance of his poetic adventure.

With Ilyās Abū Shabakah Lebanese poetry arrives at the peak of its modern contribution. Although he is recognised by writers on him to be a poet of paramount importance, only few writers began to realise the vitality of his experiment.[75] However, his true dimensions have not yet been fully explored. The main reason for this does not merely lie in the slowness of critical exploration into recent great poetry written before the fifties,

but also in the drastic change that has come over the Arab psyche and experience in the fifties and after. Modern Arabs, after the Palestine catastrophe and what it brought about in terms of revolutionary thought and aspirations, are anxiously looking for a solution to their economic, political and social problems. A spirit of imminent danger hovers over the Arab world, of constant watchfulness and expectations, and poetry like that of Abū Shabakah and Abū al-Qasīm al-Shābbi tended to be neglected in the tumult of present day life.*

Abū Shabakah deserves a much more thorough study than this work can dedicate to him. However, an attempt will be made to show his particular genius and his position among modern Arab poets.

Abū Shabakah came to the writing age in the twenties. The poet of the day in Lebanon was al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr, that veritable mixture of Classicism, Realism, Traditionalism and pseudo-Romanticism. There were several other established poets in the Lebanese literary arena among whom Amīn Nakhlah was gaining a very strong position even without publishing a diwan of his own poetry. Yūsuf Ghuṣūb published his first collection of poems in 1928 under the title of Al-Qafas al-Mahjūr, with an introduction by 'Umar Fakhūri who regarded it as "a great literary event, a blooming flower in the desert of our literary life in these barren days".[76]

By the beginning of 1928 Abū Shabakah had already published two volumes of his poetry, Al-Qaithārah (1926) and Al-Marīḍ al-Sāmit (January 1928). However, these two volumes were no match for the much finer poetry that was being written in Lebanon in the twenties and were certainly no match at all to Ghuṣūb's Al-Qafas. But the seeds, not only of his greater poetry but also of his Romanticism are embodied in the two volumes.

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* The recent revival which the Tunisian poet Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbi had in his own country and even out of it, did not really help much to the general understanding of his experiment and its importance in modern Arabic poetry, nor did it direct much attention to him and away from the general strong involvement of the reading public with the more modern poetic experiments of the fifties and sixties.

In Al-Qaithārah Abū Shabakah's Romantic attributes can be seen in the melancholy:

77 امسح الدمع فلا تروى الحيـــاة دمعة العينـــــــــين
اهجـر الكون فمصباح الوجـــود ليـــس فيـــه زيـــــت
واطلب الانوار في مأوى الخلـــود في قصـــــور المـــــوت

in theglorification of pain as a means to spiritual greatness:

78 يا بلادى كفـاك عزا بنفســي ان نفسي حسامـــك المطـــــرور
لا تقولي قد احرقتها البلايـــا كل نفس لـم تحترق لا تنيـــــر

and in the frequent mention of death:

79 اسمعيني لحن الردى اسمعينـــي فحياتي على شفـــار المنـــون
....
لك عندى وصيـة فاحفظيهـــا عي بعد الممات ان تنسيـــــني

Some of the horrifying images which later appear in greater vigour in Afā'i show themselves here. There is a macabre relish in the following:

80 اودك جاحظـة المقلتـــين وطيف الحمـــام على كل خـــد
اودك غائبـــة فـــي ضريـــح تنامين في تربـــة الابـــد
ولا تعذليني علـــى مـــا وددت ففي ذمّة الحب ما قـــد اودّ

His deep religious feeling is also portrayed in his poem "Ughniyyat al-Maghīb" in which the influence of his readings in modern Arabic poetry, especially al-Mahjar poetry, is seen.[81]

The poetry of Al-Qaithārah, moreover, is a very good source for a close study of the many influences which were now working on him. Razzouq discusses them but does not explore them as fully as he could have done.[82] There is a marked influence of the French Romantics; the influence of his readings of Baudelaire appears in his horrifying visions of death which were to obsess him for some time until Afā'i was achieved. The influence of his readings in Arabic poetry both Classical and Mahjar also show themselves. The tone and sentiment in the following are reminiscent of al-Mahjar poetry:

83 واذا هزك التذكر بالرغم — وشاء الوداد ان تذكريني
فخذي في الظلام قيثار حبي — واقصدي القبر في ظلال السكون
والقري نقرة عليه يسمعك — انينا كزفرتي وانيني

And the sentiment and image in the following are very Classical:

84 بروحي من مضني ونفر — له مقلة علمتني السهر
اذا ما نظرت الى وجهه — رأيت على كل خد قمر

But the volume represents an experiment which had not yet established itself or discovered its true channels. Although it shows a strong poetic gift which is trying "to emerge from the potential to the actual",[85] and reveals his individuality and independence,[86] it does fully prepare the way for the surprising achievement of Afā'i. A first diwan, it falls below the first diwans published by Ghusūb and later on by the Symbolist, Sa'īd 'Aql.

Al-Marīd al-Sāmit is a narrative and is therefore the first objective attempt of the poet. Later on, in 1941, he attempted some pastoral poetry of an objective nature, but the rest of his poetry remains highly subjective. This long poem is the true story of a Lebanese young man who was in love with an Egyptian girl but who falls victim to tuberculosis which kills him. The poem delineates the tragedy: the mother's grief, the sister's anguish and then the inevitable Romantic end with his death and his beloved's indescribable sorrow.

In this long poem the poet's style shows greater strength and terseness than in Al-Qaithārah:

87 واذا ما مررت تحت نخيل النهر — يوما حيث ابتسمنا مليا
حيث كنا نبني قصور الاماني — حيث كنا نجني الشباب النديا
حيث كنا نلقّن القلب درسا — فيعيه النخيل من شفتيا
فاحذري وقفة هناك لئلا — تسمعي من فم النخيل نعيا

However, despite the fact that in the greater part of the poem Abū Shabakah shows his own individuality, there are still some traces of a traditional nature. The conventional hyperbole is there:

88 قرأتهـا فامسكـت عـبرات لو اريقت في النيـل عالـت جلالـه
عبرات من ذوب قلـب مدمـى لو اريقـت في القفـر ادمت رمالـه

as well as the Classical end of the bereaved beloved dying or nearly dying at the grave of the dead lover:

89 واخـيرا مضوا الى القـبر حـتى يطمئنـوا للمشهـد العجّـاب
فرأوا جثـة مبعثـرة الشعـر تناجي وعينهـا في التـراب
لم يبقّ السقـام والحـزن منهـا غير روئيـا بقيـة من شبـاب

Although this poem is an objective attempt, Razzouq is right when he says that Abū Shabakah wrote the story because it attracted him and was in line with his own emotional temperament.[90]

With Afā'i 'l-Firdaus which appeared in 1938 the poet's reputation and position were established. It is certainly a unique contribution in Arabic poetry. With it the Christian tradition in modern Arabic literature is given its final confirmation as a living heritage.

Afā'i is in fact a slim volume, made up of only fourteen poems written between 1928 and 1938. However, only his poem "Al-Ṣalāt al-Ḥamrā'" was written in 1928, most of the poems of the collection being written in 1929. His famous Biblical poems "Sadūm" and "Shamshūn" were both written in 1934, and the two poems which reflect his horrifying vision of the world, "Al-Dainūnah" and "Al-Qādhūrah" were written in 1933 and 1934 respectively.

It is apparent that the poetry of Afā'i is the result of a few shocking experiences. Two of these are described by him and by writers on him. The first was the physical relationship with the beautiful married woman mentioned above. The second was the discovery, through a particular event, of the treachery, deceit and hypocrisy of people.[91] This discovery resulted in his poem "Al-Dainūnah" in which he says:

92 ان الورى اطلقـوا ريحا الى سقـر تقود للنار قوما دانـه البشـر

Abū Shabakah, it seems, was not able to get over the effects of his experiences easily, for although it is possible that his illicit relationship with the married woman, the heroine of Afā'i, ended in 1929, "Shamshūn"

and "Sadūm", which are a symbolic expression of his repugnance and indignation were written later on, and even in his last poem "Al-Turḥ", written in 1938, lingering shadows of this turbulant experience and a wistful tone of repentence are portrayed:

الا نسي بذلت حبي ولم اطمعك منه سوى الفتات الباقي ؟ 93

This is the poem one feels Abū Shabakah wrote when his child was still-born.

The originality of the poems of Afā'i springs from many elements. A quick perusal of the diwan gives an immediate impression of originality, for its unusual themes, its violent, turbulant atmosphere, its tone and method of approach, immediately impose themselves on the reader. And in fact, these were the major points of discussion taken up by writers on him.[94] However, a more analytic approach will reveal that the diwan's importance and vitality lie deeper than that.

In the first place, the poetry in Afā'i is a poetry of conflict. This is a rare experience in Arabic poetry in which very little spiritual conflict is usually portrayed.

In the second place, the poetry of Afā'i is a poetry of neurosis, in which obsessions, horrifying visions and devastating phobias possess the poet.[95]

In the third place, it is a poetry of confession and self-rejection. This stands in marked contrast to the traditional fakhr found in such abundance in Classical poetry. Self-condemnation is hardly a theme admitted into Arabic poetry or the Arab psyche.*

In the fourth place this poetry deals directly with sexual matters, but is never pornographic. On the contrary, it is greatly contemptuous of illicit sexual relations and has no real relationship with the poetry that extolls the theme of physical love in Arabic. Abū Shabakah spoke of

* This should not mean that Abū Shabakah did not indulge in self-praise, for he did that too, giving a more interesting variety to a self-portrait of great originality.

perverse things but was not perverse himself, and although he delved in squalor, he had no taste for it.[96]

In the fifth place this poetry combines the profane and the religious. His rage, which is beyond bounds, at the sins he committed, is in its essence a 'religious rage', prompted by a great contempt he felt for the flesh, a contempt which seems to spring from the teachings of the Catholic faith. His dualism is more a dualism of true experience than that of the Mahjar poets.

Three more things, however, account for Abū Shabakah's attitude towards sin. Firstly, Arab culture which emphasises the importance of chastity in woman. This is an internalised attitude in the Arab psyche and must be always kept in mind when discussing Arab attitudes towards sex. The poet's violent rejection of the "mother of the child"[97] as he frequently refers to her and his blind, uncompromising condemnation of her sexual indulgence with him take their fanatic emphasis from the culture of the whole Arab people. Two kinds of women exist in the diwan, the angel-like woman of innocence and chastity, and the whore, thus confirming the sharp division long established in Arab culture. He talks to the first, the innocent thus:

[98] وحق روحك يا غلوا ،ولو غدرت — بي الليالي واصمت قلبي النوب
ان كنت في سدّرة او كنت في دعر — ومر طيفك مرّ الطهر والادب

but addresses the other with these fiery verses:

[99] اميرة الشهوة الحمراء ان دمي — من نسلك الهادم المهدوم فاحترمي
خلقت تحترفين الموت فاقتربي — مني فاني احترفت الموت من قدم
....
هاتي من العهر اشكالا ملونة — نمهر بها بعضنا بعضا وننهدم

This sharp differentiation has been also noticed in ʿUmar Abū Rīshah's poetry, discussed above.

Secondly, his provincial upbringing, which must have confirmed this attitude in him and stretched it to include the man himself. The

provincial code of honour in the Arab world lays a great emphasis on chastity in a man, or at least it did so in the Lebanon of the third and fourth decades.[100] And although this code of honour remains far more strict on the woman, it involves the man as well. The fact that Abū Shabakah was inflicting an aggression on another man's honour fills him with rage and contempt:

101 اقول لها اعراق زوجك لـــم تـــزل ... وفي قلبه عطف الابوة لم يـــــــبرى
ولم يبر احساس الرجـــال بصـــدره ... فحبّك يجرى منه في الجهـــة اليسرى
اقول لها ثوب العفاف تذكـــــرى ... ففي ساعة الاكليل لم يـــك مغـــبرا
لبست رداء العرس ابيض ناصعـــــا ... فمن ايـــن جاءت هذه اللطخة الحمـــرا ؟

Thirdly, all these basic characteristics were coloured and released through his readings in French literature. Writers on him are not agreed as to the extent of French literary influences on him. It is true that Abū Shabakah was too genuine a poet to imitate directly any other poet, but he lived at an age when Arab creativity was in real need of new methods and a wider poetic experience. Moreover, he was an avid reader of French literature and his book Rawābit is a living testimony of his admiration for the French culture.[102] A poet cannot evade or escape the results of his readings of poems he enjoys; for influences do work in a subtle way. It is, therefore, impossible to conceive of the idea that his contribution, which shows a completely unprecedented approach in Arabic, had not been directly influenced by his readings in French poetry. One can say that his Biblical education combined with his French readings and with other influences to make him what he was. However, it will be impossible in a general work like this to follow up all these influences in Abū Shabakah's poetry, for this needs a detailed study. Unfortunately, Razzouq's book on the poet, which is the only detailed study of his poetry, does not attempt such a full analysis.

But Afā'i remains a book of religious suffering in which pain is the way to repentance and self-purification. In it we read of an internal

fragmentation through the poet's dialogue with sin, and witness the insistence on stripping sin naked as a means to the greatest purity.[103] The recurring motif in the diwan is the conflict between virtue and vice, sin and repentance. The poet is in the grip of a devastating passion which he rejects, even while still under its spell:

فربّ نيرّة يا ليل توقظني — الى المفاف فانسى عبء آثامي [104]
احس في جسدى شوقا يعذبني — ففي دمي سورة كالخمر في جامي
....
حبي النقيّ كايماني القديم مضى ، — وكم هذيت به من بعض اوهامي

He is struggling to preserve the last streaks of lost innocence in an essentially virtuous spirit, to thwart from himself the damning effects of an unacceptable carnal predicament; and sometimes, fully despairing, he gives up the struggle in sheer suicidal abandon:

فلنمت يدا بيد — ولنغيّب البريق [105]
بين شهوة الجسد — والرحيق

In his anger and incapacity to halt the charge of his passion, he revives the stories of other seductresses of Biblical history. "Shamshūn" and "Sadūm" are not real narratives, but are the reflection of the poet's acutely tormented state of mind. He is crying in them his lost virginity, a virginity he had mourned on several previous occasions:

وكلما ذكر اسمي مرّ في فمه — ذكر التي صقلت للموت اغلالي [106]
ذكر التي اختصرت عمرى بشهوتها — وخلدت عهرها الدامي لاجيال

A very strong hint of Baudelaire's spirit is felt in Abū Shabakah's violent, deprecating treatment of his subjects and in his grim visions. He shared with him the constant comparison between two kinds of love where, to use Martin Turnell's words on Baudelaire, "one stands for death and degradation, and the other for life and happiness".[107] The influence of Baudelaire on Abū Shabakah ought to be followed in far greater details of analysis for which this work has no scope. This work can only deal with one more example of the French influence on him, that of Alfred de Vigny's

"La Colere de Samsum"[108] on his poem "Shamshūn".

There is no doubt that Abū Shabakah is influenced in this poem by that of de Vigny's,[109] but points of difference do exist. In the first place, the images of Abū Shabakah are completely his: the angry lion, the lusty lioness, the luscious furtive snake, etc. In the second place, while the French poem begins calmly and descriptively and then gradually rises to heights of passionate anger at the end, the Arabic poem begins angrily and keeps a sustained fury throughout the poem arriving at great emotional crisis near the end. What is particularly charming and effective in the Arabic poem is its excellent economy. The poem is not a narrative like Al-Marīd al-Sāmit, but takes it for granted that the reader is familiar with the story. The episode of the hair cutting, for example, is omitted, although the reader is prepared for the advent of the crime by ominous exhortations and words of abuse which the poet pours over Dalīlah. She is beautiful, but with the beauty of the snake of Eden " انـت،حسناءُ مثـل حيـة عـدن "[110] and in her breasts death lurks:

ملقيّة فبيـن نهـديك غامـــــت هوة الموت في الفراش الوثيـــــر 111

and from her lips poison flows:

وعلى ثغرك الجميـــل ثمـــار حجبـت شهوة الردى في العصيـــر 112

The voice of the poet disappears sometimes and it is Samson who is talking at the fall of darkness in the night of the crime, with the voice of a man who has no doubt as to the dangerous evil of his fair companion. The curtain falls only to be drawn presently on the committed crime. The background is a stark contrast, for the morning is laughing in the light of the young sun:

واتى الصبح ضاحـك الوجـه يرغـي زبـد النور في ضحـــاه الغريـــر 113

Only one word in this verse suggests the presence of evil: yurghi , bubbles of light not playing, but foaming. It was a great achievement to borrow a well established story and transfer it to a personal experience.

The two poems are alike in several points. Both of them, to use

the words of P.G. Castex are "un immense cri de fureur".[114] Abū Shabakah, just like de Vigny, "a pathétiquement résumé dans ces vers son expérience cruel de l'amour",[115] although in Abū Shabakah's case the cruelty of the experience rises from the devastating effect it has on his innocence and health of mind. However, the situation amounts to the same result for Abū Shabakah's poem "traduit sous un forme symbolique, un état d'âme aprouvé par le poète".[116] In both poems, moreover, there is a strong hint of the war of the sexes; Abū Shabakah's protest is that:

والعظيم العظيم تضعفه انثى فينقاد كالحقير الحقير [117]

De Vigny's protest is even stronger:

[118] Et, plus ou moins, la Femme est toujours DALILA

The fire of hate towards woman in Abū Shabakah is limited to the lewd woman and he keeps it alive in several other poems including his long work Ghalwā' written during the same period. He was never able to escape the values embodied in his own culture.

Both poems, moreover, share a burning sincerity, a formidable intensity and a tragic beauty,[119] and both poems reflect a deep pessimism.[120] But Abū Shabakah, despite the fact that he was influenced, undoubtedly, by de Vigny's approach and spirit in the poem, retains his own individuality and reproduces a great work of art which can well be said to surpass de Vigny's poem in strength and beauty.

The same artistic power and mastery, however, is not found equally in all the poems of the dīwan. "Al-Qādhūrah", for example, does not rise to the level of "Shamshūn", "Sadūm", "Al-Af'ā", "Al-Shahwatu 'l-Ḥamrā'" and others. 'Abbūd admires in this poem what he describes to be Abū Shabakah's"pictorial images".[121] He compares it to Buadelaire's "Une Charogne" because it is, in his opinion, "a collection of corpses".[122] He finds its images and words skillfully co-ordinated.[123] It is true that some of the brightest aspects of the poet's skill are to be found in this poem: the horrifying details of an image:

واغمدت في صلب الدجنة ناظري وفي كل جفن لي من الهدب مبرد
فابصرتا طبّاقا تعمدها يد اصابع من عظم ،وتصبغها يد [124]

and the great exploitation of sound images:

كأن الورى مستنقع يتنهـــــــــدّ وللحمأ الغالي نشيش ورغـــــوة 125

However, this poem does not rise to the same kind of lucidity and artistic co-ordination between image and experience which we find in his best work. In his better poems we are aware of what Turnell terms "the internal logic in the sequence of images and in the way in which they re-inforce or deliberately contrast with one another".[126] In "Al-Qādhūrah" he is awkward and lacking in a "correspondence between external and internal logic".[127] The poet in this poem and in "Al-Dainūnah" has a blurred, repulsive vision of the world which to him is a mass of ugliness and evil. He hurls his images, one after another, panting and feverish, without a moment's respite. But art, when it is at its best, is capable of a purification and a co-ordination of strongly felt impressions, and of translating them into an aesthetically apt relationship between image, experience and emotion. In these two poems, Abū Shabakah lays a precedence for what one may term "the poetry of the consistently repellent imagery" in modern Arabic poetry. Usually, this poetry abounds with physical revulsion.

Although Abū Shabakah's poetry on the whole is a record of inner experience, his general outlook was not isolated from the contemporary situation and he was troubled by what he believed to be a breakdown of traditional values:

صبي الخمور فهذا العصرعصر طلا اما السكارى فهم ابناؤه النجـــب 128
....
ولا تخافي عذولا فالعـــذول مضـــى والعصر سكران يا اخت الشقا تعب
طريقـه الشك انّي ســـار يملكـــه وحلمـه الشهوات الحمر والقـــرب

The outlook of the period was hazy and uncertain, but there was a great scope for moralisation and a questioning in poetry of norms and shifting standards of values. In fact a thread of confirmation of traditional values was to run in Arabic poetry even after the advent of the fifties side by side with many unconventional streaks. It was also to align itself, paradoxically, with that kind of poetry (particularly platform poetry) dedicated to achieve a higher level of national enlightenment among

the larger number of people, for which purpose some traditional values, much adhered to among the larger number of the population, were to be courted. But in Abū Shabakah's case, his reaction was spontaneous, stemming from his own culture and character, and had no other end in view. Sharārah saw that his poetry was not Romantic in the least, but was rather Realistic, in rebellion against the economic distress and the moral disillusionment in Lebanon at the time.[129] These, in fact, do account for the poet's anger and disillusionment, but his experience of them, it must be remembered, was personal and first hand, and his emotional reaction to them was genuinely in the Romantic tradition. There is hardly any treatment of any of these subjects objectively and altruistically, his rejection of them being subjective and coloured by the facts of his own suffering and his own personality:

ابليس خذهم جميعا في براقعهم وارفع جناحك عن ابكار اوتاري 130

What is important in his disillusionment in, say, the betrayal of the married woman of the values of chastity and faithfullness, is that he regards it as an indictment, not only of the woman, but also of the whole age, and his innocence is moaned together with the innocence of the whole decadent generation. This woman to him is no different from a prostitute, and in her degradation of love she is the symbol of those forces that are undermining the whole integrity and moral cohesion of an age previously given up to established virtues and noble ideals.[131]

It is amazing how Shauqi Ḍaif misunderstood the whole situation of Afā'i. To him, these poems did not reflect a true picture,[132] for they were created objectively[133] so that the poet could delineate woman's poisonous lust.[134] Ḍaif is adamant that the poet, in these poems, is not "poisoned himself",[135] but is merely playing the role of a preacher with a pessimistic outlook.[136] This shows that Ḍaif has made this study of the poet without trying to learn anything about his life, and without any critical intuition which should have swiftly and immediately detected the

ardent tone of true suffering with which the poems are permeated. Ḍaif's book could not have been written before 1954;[137] the essays on Abū Shabakah and his life, Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt, had been published in 1948. There does not seem to be any reason why a responsible critic should have overlooked to consult biographical material on a poet he writes about when this material is so closely connected with his whole poetic contribution.

Although Abū Shabakah was capable of a great variety of tone, he did not altogether abandon the oratorical style in Afā'i. His intimate tensions and stresses, his anguish and torment, are coated with such violence that the poet's voice is raised in protest and condemnation. Even his confessions in such poems as "Al-Ṣalāt al-Ḥamrā'" are more like the loud cries of a drowning man asking for help and seldom come out in whispered tones:

لكم دعتني الى الفحشاء اميال وانذرتني تجاريب واهوال
ان التجاريب للالباب موعظة لكنها لألى الاضلال اضلال 138

A phenomenon in Afā'i is its magnificent overtures, for the poems usually open up with startling images and commanding exhortations. Often, he addresses someone else: God, the woman, an unknown person, and sometimes he addresses himself. Usually he resorts to the imperative, which is a striking procedure that lends dramatic effect to his poems and is reminiscent of Classical poetry.

His images are concrete and reflect to a great extent, his mood and the nature of his experience. They are closely related to his inner vision:

وسوف ترى فيك المآثم نعجة قد التصقت في بطنها حية سمرا 139

He is delineating here his impression of his relationship with the married woman. A wishful image appears here, permeated with his own resentment and contempt of her:

ستحفر مصقول الرخام بجسمها شفاهك حتى تبرز الاعظم الصفرا 140

The erring woman is obsessively likened to the Biblical snake,[141] and it is after the snake-woman of Paradise that the whole diwan is called.

Some of his images have a dazzling vitality about them:

142 اخاف في الليل من طيف يسيل على ... موجات عينيك حينا ثم يغترب

and:

143 صبّي الخمور ولا تبقي على مهج ... موج الشباب على رجليك يصطخب

He is a master at using metaphor to suggest an atmosphere and to foretell an imminent event:

144 ملقيةً فالليل سكران واه ... يتلوى في خدره المسحور
ونسور الكهوف اوهنها الحب ... فهانت لديه كالشحرور

Sound images are another typical device to create a special atmosphere:

145 وجملت غرغرة الافاعي كأسه ... ليذوق منها كل قلب مصرعه

and this:

146 وكانت الخمر ترغي في مقاعفها ... والجن تعزف والنيران تنفجر

Images of movement also abound:

147 طوفت بي ميتا بأروقة اللظى ... فحملت تابوتي وسرت بمأتمي

Sometimes macabre, sometimes merely horrifying, they nevertheless often have great aesthetic value. The following is particularly hurtful:

148 ستملكها ما شئت بعد فلا تخف ... فان ابنها لما يزل يجهل الامرا
صغير ،يرى الصين يرضى بلعبة ... فيرقد مغبوطا بذى الهبة الكبرى
ينام ولا يدرى بأن سخافة ... تلهى بها كانت لموبقة سعرا

He has several long images, sustained over several lines,[149] and often he resorts to paradox, which is one of the finest techniques in poetry:

150 قد اشرب الخمر لكن لا ادنسها ... واقرب الاثم لكن لست ارتكب

the same purity applying to his "guitar" which is never defiled.[151]

Writers on him have commented on his strong emotions some of which like that of self-rejection mentioned above, were not dreamt of in Arabic poetry before except in very rare instances. There is a kind of fire in his poetry, arriving at anguish in Afā'i.[152]

In this diwan, Abū Shabakah introduced many changes in the poetic tools of his days: in theme, tone, emphasis, sentiment, imagery and depth. This is one of the most angry volumes in modern Arabic poetry, and is

definitely one of the two most angry poetic contributions before the fifties, the second being that of al-Jawāhiri.

His next work was a drastic contrast to Afā'i 'l-Firdaus and confirms the variety of conflicting tendencies in this poet.[153] This was Al-Alḥān (1941) in which a deep emotional and intellectual rejection of the kind of complications treated in Afā'i is reflected. The collection has seventeen poems, the last three of which belong to his long poem Ghalwā' which he published in full some four years later. Among the remaining fourteen poems several are directly pastoral poems[154] in which, to use W.W. Greg's words, the song springs from the yearning of the poet's tired soul to escape to a life of simplicity and innocence.[155] The shepherds in one of these songs associate with the peasants and the two parties join in the praises of rustic simplicity and the fertility and beauty of rustic life:

156

الراعي —
حقولنـــا . سهولنـــا كلها طرب ، كلها طـــرب
الشمس فيها ذهب والسواقي منـــي

الحصادون —
الى الحصاد جنى الجهاد قلب البلاد يحيا بنـــا
هيا احصدوا وأنشـــدوا الحب قلب ويـــد

But in other songs it is sometimes the peasant's life that is depicted:

157

ارجـــــع الى الوادى فلاحـــه الغـــادى
وطـــيره الشـــادى
والرفـــش والمســـولا والموســـم المقبـــلا

One poem among the more distinctly pastoral ones has an undercurrent of "tender melancholy and pathos",[158] because of the sense of contrast between a past life of simplicity and noble endeavour and a present assault of an adulterating civilisation:

159

كان الضمـــير الهنـــي من كنزنـــا المزمـــن
وراحة الوجـــدان وكان ... كان الامـــا ن
والعيـــش حلو الجنـــى
يا دهر ارجع لنـــا
ما كان في لبنـــان

There is a soft melodiousness and a limpid purity in these songs, but they do not rise to the level of his other poetry. To suit the subject, whose true roots in modern Arabic lay in the colloquial, he had to resort to a greatly simplified diction and a highly simplified music. Abū Shabakah is never at his best when he is writing objectively, for his true poetic element stems from a concentration on personal experience and the adoption of big themes. Despite a love of simplicity he was not a simple man but one of the most complicated modern Arab poets. His love of country life and his constant sojourn in the village[160] gave him a streak of provincialism which showed itself in part in the cult of purity with which he was obsessed, although even this had more behind it than mere provincialism, as has been explained.

It is because Abū Shabakah is at his best when he speaks subjectively that some other poems in this small collection which are not pastoral, are more interesting. The personal experience of the poet gives them weight and poignancy:

[161]

زرت نهر الصليب امس لاسمع ... كيف ينساب ماؤه الكوثري
فرآني صفصافه فتفجع ... بضباب كأن وجهي نعي
قلت للقلب ،يا شقي ،فرجع ... شاطئ النهر هاتفا يا شقي

This song and some others like "Al-Masā' fi'l-Jibāl",[162] and "Ṣalāt al-Maghīb"[163] are not pastoral at all, but are subjective poems which are inspired by nature and in which a love of country and its landscape is reflected.

Razzouq rightly sees a Romantic element in the songs of Al-Alḥān[164] but does not realise that some of these songs belong directly to the pastoral tradition in literature. Abū Shabakah was probably influenced in these songs by a living tradition in Lebanese folk poetry to idealise the village and country life.[165] One does not see any reference to French pastoral poets such as Marot for example among the poets he read, although he might have been remotely influenced by the "unreal and sentimental simplicity" of Saint-Pierre's Paul et Virginie which he translated in 1933, since this

novel is influenced in its turn by pastoral poetry.[166]

One of the pastoral characteristics of these songs is the sense of contrast they give between town and country.[167] This is confirmed by what we know of the poet's love of the simplicity of country life and his hatred of the immorality and materialism of city culture as he described them in an article he wrote in 1941, the same year in which he published Al-Alhān.[168] Razzouq comments on this article but refers Abū Shabakah's songs to patriotic feelings and a desire to invite his countrymen to love the country and glorify the earth.[169]

Ra'īf al-Khouri, a critic with a definite socialist point of view, while praising Abū Shabakah's patriotism as seen in these songs, complains that the poet does not treat the actual reality of peasant life in Lebanon, which is not as happy as the poet's "Romantic patriotism" has delineated.[170] But the discussion of social problems is not essentially a pastoral characteristic and Abū Shabakah, whom one suspects had a good idea of the kind of poetry he was writing, had never intended in these graceful, facile songs to embody greater meanings than the charming but genuine portrayal of a naive simplicity of rural life.

It is fitting to discuss next his volume Ghalwā', for although the poet did not publish it in full except in 1945, he had written its several parts between 1926 and 1932.[171] It is in fact one long poem with an interesting structure, for the poet divides it into four phases, each phase being divided in turn into several sections. He varies his metres from one section to another, employing six metres in all: rajaz, mutaqārab, sarī', khafīf, ṭawīl and wāfir.

Ghalwā' is an original poem which can leave critics undecided as to its real artistic value. It is not, on the whole, a very attractive poem,[172] for neither the story told in it, nor the style of some of the stanzas are particularly intriguing, or of major interest to the modern reader. However, it reaches, in places, great heights of beauty and artistic skill.

The story is about the young Ghalwā' who, beautiful and chaste, visits a girl cousin of hers in another town. Ghalwā' wakes up one night to see her cousin in a sinful situation with a man. She becomes feverish from the shock and remains ill for a long time, and ends by believing that it was she who sinned. The story then tells of the sorrows and suffering of her young and innocent lover, Shafīq, and of her great torment and sickness of spirit. She is partly cured at the end.

Although Abū Shabakah took pains, in the preface to the volume to assure the reader that Ghalwā' is not a true story, his friends tend to believe the contrary. F. Ḥubaish seems to be certain that it was a true story[173] and his opinion is shared by George Ghurayyib[174] and Mīkhā'īl Nu'aimah.[175]

However, whether the poem is wholly or only partly true is very difficult to certify, but it can be said that the story sounds most convincingly genuine, which is, artistically speaking, what interests us most. Abū Shabakah declared when he published it that he had burned over half of it.[176]

In this poem Abū Shabakah's obsession with sin and purity is again a major pre-occupation, seen throughout the poem. A dark, pessimistic streak which shows itself in fantasies and visions of great horror is revealed; it sometimes touches the macabre:

177 فابصر المريضة المحتضرة مسدولة الذوائب المبعثرة
جنيبة عائمة في مقبرة
وحل في اهدابه تابوت في قلبه صبية تموت

In the following, images of physical decomposition are a strong reminder of Baudelaire's "Une Charogne":

178 .. وتارة في كفن ملتفة يسرّح الموت عليها كفه
بحسرة عاطفة ولهفة
بارزة في فمها الاسنان مزرقة كأنها ديدان
واللثة الحمراء زعفران

But the poet in this poem is capable of portraying some beautiful and bright visions too. Here he is celebrating the coming of the poetic inspiration:

179 قدست شعلة السما فمـــك الانســـي فاحمد نار السماء ومجـــدّ
وهواك الشقـــي قدســـه الدمـــع نغمه بالدمـــاء وخلـــد
فجرّ لحب من فؤادك شعـــرا ايها البلبل الصموت فانشـد

Other visions of a purifying suffering and pain, Christ like, prepare him to perceive the light of God:

180 من ليـــس يرقـى ذروة الجلجلـة ولم يسمـرّ في الهوى انملـة
ويرفـع الصلقـم والخل لـه
....
لن يعرف الدهر شعاع الالـــه .....

As a narrative, the poem sometimes limps, but it can arrive at great skill and transparency in certain passages such as the passage where the mother of the hero talks to him.[181] The narrative here sounds most genuine and typical of the kind of concern and advice an old fashioned Arab mother gives her young son who is ailing from love.

Although Abū Shabakah still has in this poem some traditional images such as "حوريـة من عذارى الجنـــان"[182] and:

183 والبـدر في مخدعهـــا انـــاء تسيل منـه فضـــة بيضـــاء

some of his images are very original and enjoy great vitality. His capacity of expressing his own emotional state through his choice of image is fantastic:

184 والموج بعد الموج كيف ذابا مستسلما على الحصى منسابا
يقبل القبـــور والترابـا
.....
وللمياه زبـــد كثيـــف ينسج منه ثفن خفيـــف
عليه من نور الدجى حروف

This is quite macabre in an otherwise pleasant image, and of high aesthetic value. Some of his pictorial images are very effective:

185 واذرع العجائـــز المرتجفـــة كأنهـــا مسارج منعكفـــة
جفـت على قمتهـــا الشمـــوع

But the best element in Ghalwā' is the poet's celebration of pain and faith and his glorification of poetry. Just as pain is the means to arrive at the knowledge of God, it is also the means to great poetic creativity:

186
اجرح القلب واسق شعرك منـــه فدم القلب خمـــرة الاقـــلام
مصدر الصدق في الشعور هو القلب وفي القلب مهبـط الالهـــام
واذا انت لم تعذب وتغمـــس قلما في قـــرارة الآلام
فقوافيك زخـــرف وبريـــق كعظام في مدفـن من رخـــام

Abū Shabakah seems to have been very proud of this poem and expected great success for it when it was published.[187] Had he published it when he finished it in the early thirties, Ghalwā' might have attracted great attention. But it came out after the publication of several important works of poetry: Abū Shabakah's own volumes Afā'i and Nidā' al-Qalb and Sa'īd 'Aql's al-Majdaliyyah and Qadmūs, to name but a few, and Ghalwā', in comparison to these, did not seem to hold equal attraction to the readers of poetry at the time.

It might be a good idea to examine Abū Shabakah's two volumes Nidā' al-Qalb (1944) and Ila 'l-Abad (1945) together, since they both deal with the same theme and mark a completely new phase of the poet's life and artistic development. Afā'i 'l-Firdaus was an expression of the tragic outlook of a man approaching maturity, whose disillusionment meant to him the breakdown of youthful idealism. Nidā' al-Qalb and Ila 'l-Abad represent the return to innocence and purity:

188 قلـت ما زال في خيالك نـــزر من صباع على " افاعيـك " ذابـــا
فامحـه واغتســل كأنك لم يعرفـك مـــاض ولـــم تغـــن كتابـــا

The traumatic neurosis of Afā'i disappears to give way to a sustained song of ecstasy and celebration. A tender and gentle disposition shows itself here and the experience equips the poet with the power of giving voice to human compassion. In Afā'i he was tempted with a vision of terrible

vengeance and spoke of violence and death. In these two volumes he speaks from an affirmative standpoint, and his former devastating doubts give way to faith and serenity:

189 لي في تأسي يقين لم يكـــــن ذهب الشك مع الحب القديـــــم

Confronted with such variations of attitude, approach and tone, the critic cannot but wonder at the flexibility of the poetic tools with which this poet was equipped. This flexibility stems from the very nature of his genius. For life's experiences and the play of fortune unite with his rare talent to make of his poetry a superior work of art. Great poets can never bear the burden of the unchangeable tone and the same persistent attitudes, even if their tensions remained unsolved. They can never allow the monotony of approach to dominate their art.

It is not only the triumph of the moral ideal but also the triumph of love that is celebrated in these two volumes. 'Abbūd calls Abū Shabakah "the poet of love and suffering"[190] and "the poet of sexual instinct".[191] This is strange, for, reading these two diwans, one can hardly recall in Arabic another poet who celebrated the ecstasy of love and its deep joys as much as Abū Shabakah did. The exultation that sweeps over the poet as he writes is insurpassable, and love is a mystic experience in which the poet was able to find harmony and oneness with the beloved:

192 جمالك هذا ام جمالي ؟ فانـــني اري فيك انسانا جميل الهوى مثلـــي
وهذا الذي احيا به انت ام انـا ؟ وهذا الذي اهواه شكلك ام شكلـــي ؟
وحسبي اري في الحلم للحب صورة اظلك يجري في ضميري ام ظلـــي ؟
تربّع كل الحب في كـل مـا اري أمن روحك الكلّي هذا السنى الكلـــي ؟

and this:

193 اراك على جفني ،احسك في دمـي وانشق في روحي شذا روحك الحلـوا
مزجتك بي كالخمر تمزج بالنـــدى فمنك بجسمي كل جارحـة نشـــوى

And indeed he lives in an enchanted world of splendour with her:

194 نحن عدن وهـم مكان مريـــب شقيت فيـــه اعين وقلـــــوب
سكّب الحب رحمة الله عينـــــا فالسنى ماتج بنا والنايـــــوب
كل اعراقنـــا السعيـــدة للايمـــان مجـــرى وللرجـــــــاء دروب
تتناهى بنا الـــى الغبطـــة الكـــبرى فتفنـــى بسحرهـا ونـــذوب

To him she is the promised land[195] and, surrounded by Romantic passion, is transfigured into an angelic creature:

196
اتيت من السماء عليت ظل ومن اغراسها خضر ظرى
فتقبلني على شفتي رسول ومس فمي كلام عبقرى

"The words and feelings of the loved woman", to borrow Jean Prevost words, "appear to occupy the first place[197] there. She is ... the inspirer,[198] ... to whom the poet owes his genius. The inspirer is aware of her role and of her mission, so that her beauty seems but a paltry thing[199] compared to the loftiness of her mind and impulses of her heart."[200]

In Nidā' there are two loves. The first beloved is the singer whose voice was a balsam which cured him from the aftermath of his Snakes:

201
كان في صوتها ذرور من السحر وهذا الذرور كان مراهم
فتلاشى حلقومها في لذتي نفسي يلاشي فحيح تلك الحلاقم
حبها كان مطهرا لعذابي قمت منه الى نعيم فائم

It is very difficult to decide which poems in Nidā' were written for the singer who seems to have been quite a gentle influence on him.[202] But this volume starts the trend to a pantheistic existence with the beloved and the whole universe, and some of the poems represent some of the noblest expressions of love and profane mysticism written in the Arabic language.[203] What elevates the poetry most is perhaps his capacity to express very great emotions without ever falling into sentimentality. In these volumes, just as in Afā'i, he has the magic power of transferring his emotions to the reader complete and vibrant with the vitality of true experience.

Ila 'l-Abad is one long poem divided into three sections. F.A. Bustāni likens it to a vast beautiful lake,[204] 'Abbūd likens it to an oasis.[205] It opens up with a prayer to God to protect the beloved. The overture is calm and proceeds in a slow rhythm, but it then gains fervour and ecstasy as the poet asks God to consecrate his vision and hearing to her:

206
ربّ حوّل عينيّ عن كل حيّ ربّ سكّر سمعي عن الانباء

The second section is longer. This is the most traditional section of the volume, for it invokes the Classical allusion to the bird that brings a message to the beloved, as well as to the traditional emotionalism of parted lovers. The third section is divided into three parts, each narrating the history of one year of their love. In these last parts the poet is able to rise to great ecstasy and exuberance. The whole history of his love for all his women is related in this volume which ends by re-affirming the uniqueness of his love for her. There is no more any conflict here. Even his love for Ghalwā' is reaffirmed and given meaning and importance:

207

وحتّى هوى "غلوا" احسك في دمـــي واقسم ما في غلو حـب مدمـرّ
جرت في دمي وحيا وتجرين في دمـي ولكّن لون الحبّ قد يتغيّـــــر

Abū Shabakah is single minded and completely devoted to the ideal of love in this volume. Passionate love between him and Laila, his last and greatest love, existed, but in all likelihood, was not consummated. It was not a question of substituting an aesthetic for a sexual experience, but a question of avoiding a new fall of the beloved and a new breakdown of the ideals he so ardently believed in. His puritanism was one of control and emotional necessity, not the outcome of sexual or emotional deficiency. There seems to have been no pathological cause behind his conflicts. However, this question should be studied at greater length before such a matter could be decided.

In these poems Abū Shabakah emerges in a state of purity and emotional health, a man whose basic innocence had not been destroyed by past shocking experiences. We see him here gain in clear sightedness, and a fountain of joy opens up in his heart[208] of which he wanted the whole world to partake:

209

كنت ملأى من السعادة حـــتى خلت ان ليس في الـــــورى آلام
....
تتمنين لو تفيض على النـــــاس فـــلا حاسـد ولا نمّـــــــــام

He himself seems to have been stunned by his happiness which seems to have integrated him, for he writes to her telling her that her beauty brought

back to his heart the love of his own family. "You have made of me", he wrote, "I, the poet of diabolic visions, a compassionate and calm man."[210]

As in all his poetry, the imagery in these two volumes is emotional and vibrant with life:

211
وكأنني في عينهـــا لهـــب بفؤادها الولهـــان متمثـــل
يبدو رمادا حـــين تلحظنـــا عين ،وحين تغيب يشتعـــل

and these two consecutive images:

212
فآمن بها آمن بما في عيونهـــا الم ترها ارغي بها الماء واحـــترق
ويا بصري حد مرةً عن طريقهـــا كأنك ممدود بخيط من القلـــق

His narration of a meeting with her one evening and description of the old servant woman who stayed with her as chaperon but slept on the couch, is very effective, for it combines both a lively description and a tone of compassion and tenderness:

213
فاسهـــري ،فالعجـــوز نامت على المسنـــد سهرانـــة ... عليها الســـلام

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Abū Shabakah is one of the most interesting poets in the Arabic language and the most original poetic voice in the thirties and forties. A short study of his poetry cannot give it real justice. There is much to be gained from him by contemporary critics and poets, for he is one of the hinges on which modern Arabic poetry has revolved. His poetry might also be interesting to the social historian and the social psychologist, for it reflects some of the characteristics of the Arab mind at the time, and the problems which pre-occupied it. Poetry, in fact, might be the best vehicle for the social psychologist because it expresses the subconscious of the nation. However, in any such examination, Abū Shabakah's particular qualities of character and mind must be first explored and studied.

Abū Shabakah's superiority as a poet shows itself first and foremost in his capacity to translate his contradictions into poetry. His type of experience was so diversified and unusual that it needed, not only courage,

but also genius to convey it in the strong, terse poetry which he wrote. A thread of Classical strength[214] runs side by side with a new creative thread of unusual flavour. He introduced into poetry immeasurable distances and unfathomable depths. In this he excelled over Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbi, the Tunisian Romantic, who never attained his strength of phrasecology and general structure. But then Abū Shabakah was building over solid ground, with a literary background that had given birth, even a hundred years before he began writing, to a great literary renaissance. This stands in stark contrast to the literary background of al-Shābbi whose poetic gifts were also superior.

Abū Shabakah's poetry is the triumph of the man of feeling, for it would be idle to try to extract a system of thought from his poems. He completely liberated the emotion and his limpid powerful verses are a triumphant record of inner experience.[215] There is an intensive sincerity about his poetry[216] and it never shows traces of indifference and langour. Usually a poetry of extremes, its intensity, except in rare cases, is highly infective of the poet's attitudes and moods. He imparted tone and vigour to the poetry of his time, and the imagery of modern poetry gained greatly by his capacity to delineate, through concrete images, the mood and the emotional state in which he was. Finally, his poetry, was a confirmation of the Christian tradition in modern Arabic literature and has helped greatly to establish the importance of the Bible as a literary source in Arabic. The poets of the fifties, both Christian and Moslem, were to gain greatly from this vibrant, effective revival of Biblical themes, legends and images which his poetry portrayed.

Footnotes

1. Labaki, Lubnān al-Shā'ir, p.159.
2. Ibid., p.154.
3. Rawābiṭ al-Fikr wa 'l-Rūḥ baina 'l-'Arab wa 'l-Firanjah, second edition, Beirut, 1945, pp.135-141.
4. Labaki, loc.cit.
5. M. Ṣaqr, "Wathbat al-Shi'r al-Lubnāni", Al-Ādāb, January 1955, p.66.
6. Razzouq Faraj Razzouq, Ilyās Abū Shabakah wa Shi'ruh, Beirut, 1956, p.39.
7. Ibid., pp.124-125.
8. Ibid., p.39.
9. Ibid., p.40.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid. See his diwan Ghalwā', Beirut, 1945, pp.76-7.
12. Razzouq, op.cit., p.42; A. Laḥḥūd, "Shā'irunā 'l-Rūmantīqi", Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt, ed. Fu'ād Ḥubaish, Beirut, 1948, pp.44-5; Karam, in "Madkhal", however, neglected to mention the effect of this school on Abū Shabakah although his main aim in this study was to trace the influence of the poet's education on his poetry as a major formative factor.
13. Razzouq, op.cit., p.42; F. Ḥubaish mentions that he spent one year at another school in Junieh, near Beirut, "Anā wa Abū Shabakah", Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt, p.151.
14. Op.cit., p.56; see also Ra'īf al-Khouri, "Abū Shabakah fī Lubnāniyyatih", Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt, p.69.
15. Razzouq, loc.cit.
16. Ibid., p.149; Karam, "Madkhal", pp.262, 263 and 265.
17. Razzouq, op.cit., pp.45 and 57.
18. Ibid.; Yūsuf Ghuṣūb, "Laun Jadīd fi 'l-Shi'r al-Lubnāni", Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt, p.56 where he says that Abū Shabakah was easily influenced by what he read.
19. See a list of his translations in Razzouq, op.cit., pp.115-8.
20. Ibid., pp.58-9.
21. Ibid., pp.64-6; Karam, op.cit., pp.261-3 and 265.
22. See Rawābiṭ al-Fikr wa 'l-Rūḥ, pp.104-5 and 106.
23. Ibid., p.106.
24. Razzouq, op.cit., p.67.
25. Ibid., pp.67-8.
26. Ibid., pp.72-3.
27. Ibid., pp.74-9.
28. Ibid., pp.68-71; see also his letters to his wife Olga, then his fiancee, in Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt, pp.178-9; and the extracts from his diary, ibid., pp.194, 195, 198, 199, 201, 202, etc.

29. See Tawfīq Wahbah, "Anafat Ilyās Abū Shabakah", Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt, pp.90-1.

30. See ʿAbbūd, Dimaqs, p.152; Buṭrus Muʿawwaḍ, "Al-Rafīq Ilyās Abū Shabakah", Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt, pp.126-7; Mishāl Abū Shahlā, "Abū Shabakah al-Ladhi ʿArafṭuh", ibid., p.131; B. al-Bustāni, "Abū Shabakah fī Marāḥil Shiʿrih", ibid., p.17; and others.

31. ʿAbbūd, loc.cit., Mishāl Abū Shahla, loc.cit; Muʿawwaḍ, op.cit., p.127, etc.

32. Razzouq, op.cit., p.163 et seq.

33. Ibid., p.165.

34. Ibid., see also his poem "Al-Ṭurḥ" dated 1938 Afāʿi 'l-Firdaus, third edition, Beirut, 1962, pp.106-9, which is probably on this still-born child.

35. Razzouq, op.cit, pp.182-185; F. Ḥubaish, op.cit., pp.143-144.

36. Op.cit., pp.192,&195.

37. Ibid., p.184.

38. See Luṭfi Ḥaidar, "Kaifa Taktubu ʿan al-Adīb", Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt, p.118; F. Ḥubaish, op.cit., pp.156-8.

39. See her letter to him in Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt, pp.191-2 which portrays a fine literary style.

40. Razzouq, op.cit., p.246.

41. F. Ḥubaish, op.cit., p.159.

42. On his relationship with her see ibid., pp.157, 159-61, 163.

43. Ibid., pp.162-3.

44. In Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt there is ample testimony of this by the many friends who wrote on him.

45. F. Ḥubaish, op.cit., pp.139-40; Razzouq, op.cit., p.112.

46. Ḥubaish, loc.cit.

47. Ibid., pp.140-1; Razzouq, op.cit., pp.112-3.

48. Ibid., p.113; Ḥubaish, op.cit., p.140.

49. Ibid., p.142.

50. Afāʿi 'l-Firdaus, p.9.

51. As quoted by Najm, "Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah", p.349 from Al-Jumhūr newspaper, No. 98, Beirut, 1938.

52. Ibid., quoted from Al-Jumhūr newspaper, No. 65, 1938.

53. Afāʿi 'l-Firdaus, p.10.

54. Ibid., pp.10-11.

55. Ibid., pp.11-12.

56. Ibid., pp.12-13.

56A. Inspiration and Poetry, the Rede Lecture, Cambridge University Press, 1951, p.12.

57. Ibid., p.13.

58. Ibid., p.10.

59. Ibid., p.13.
60. Afā'i 'l-Firdaus, p.12.
61. Ibid., pp.12 and 13.
62. Ibid., pp.13-4. In this and the previous argument he is arguing two of Paul Valery's ideas.
63. Ibid., pp.14-5. In this and the previous argument he is referring to two of Paul Valery's ideas on poetry.
64. Ibid.
65. See Bowra, op.cit., pp.19-20.
66. Ibid., p.16.
67. See ibid., pp.16-9.
68. Afā'i 'l-Firdaus, pp.19-20.
69. Ibid., p.21.
70. Ibid.
71. Rawābiṭ al-Fikr wa 'l-Rūḥ, pp.135-41.
72. Ibid., p.66.
73. Ibid., p.157.
74. Ibid., pp.160-2.
75. See M. Ṣaqr, op.cit., p.66.
76. Quoted by Labaki, op.cit., p.175; also quoted in a letter by Ghuṣūb to the present writer dated 2nd October, 1968.
77. Quoted by Razzouq, op.cit., p.134.
78. Quoted, ibid., p.135.
79. Quoted, ibid., p.140.
80. Quoted, ibid., p.138.
81. Quoted, ibid., pp.149-51.
82. Ibid., pp.144-9.
83. Quoted, ibid., p.140.
84. Quoted, ibid., p.139.
85. B. al-Bustāni, op.cit., p.17.
86. Ibid., p.18.
87. Al-Marīḍ al-Ṣāmit, Beirut, January, 1928, p.10.
88. Ibid., p.12.
89. Ibid., p.14.
90. Op.cit., p.261.
91. See his essay "Ana" in Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt, pp.12-4.
92. Afā'i, p.101.
93. Ibid., p.106.
94. B. al-Bustāni, op.cit., p.20; 'Abbūd, Mujaddidūn, 105, etc.
95. See Ghuṣūb, op.cit., p.36; Bustāni, loc.cit.

96. See also M. Ṣaqr, op.cit., p.66.

97. See Afā'i, pp.48, 51, 52, 65.

98. Ibid., pp.51-2.

99. Ibid., p.69.

100. This is a generally accepted fact in the Arab world, on the whole. In the Lebanon, the close contact with the city and the particular position of Lebanon as a small, compact tourist centre in which the village is often a summer resort, might have lessened the issue lately. This is, however, the province of the sociologist.

101. Afā'i, p.46.

102. Razzouq, op.cit., pp.57-63; 'Abdullah Laḥḥūd, "Shā'iruna 'l-Rūmanṭīqi", Dirasat wa Dhikrayat, p.43.

103. Karam, op.cit., p.261.

104. Afā'i, p.67; see also ibid., pp.63-6.

105. Ibid., p.76-7.

106. Ibid., p.72; see also ibid., pp.62 and 51-2.

107. Baudelaire, a Study of his Poetry, London, 1953, p.265; see also his analysis of Baudelaire's poem "Une nuit que j'étais près d'une affreuse Juive", ibid., pp.263-4.

108. See Poèmes Choisis, ed. by E.A. Peers, University of Manchester, 1955, pp.68-72.

109. Labaki believes that it was de Vigny's poem which attracted Abū Shabakah to the literature of the Bible, op.cit., p.169., 'Abbūd believes that each of the two poems has its own colour and flavour, but that both are unified by anger on woman, Mujaddidūn, pp.102-3.

110. Afā'i, p.31.

111. Ibid., p.30.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid., p.32.

114. Vigny: l'homme et l'œuvre, Paris, 1952, p.131.

115. Ibid., p.129; see also ibid., for a comment on Vigny's failed love with Marie Dorval, and his personal motive for writing the poem.

116. Ibid.

117. Afā'i, p.30.

118. Poèmes Choisis, p.70.

119. Castex, op.cit., p.131 for a criticism of de Vigny's poem.

120. See ibid., pp.126-34 for a discussion of de Vigny's pessimism; see also Peers's introduction to Poèmes Choisis, pp.xxi-xxxvii.

121. Mujaddidūn, p.104.

122. Ibid.

123. Ibid., p.105.

124. Afā'i, p.38.

125. Ibid.

126. Op.cit., p.263.

127. Ibid.

128. Afā'i, pp.52-4; see also p.66.

129. Ilyās Abū Shabakah, Beirut, 1965, pp.14-28; Sharārah is the only writer on him who denies his Romanticism, all the others being agreed on it; (see Najm, "Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah," p.350; M. Ṣaqr, op.cit., pp.66 and 67; Razzouq, op.cit., pp.177, 186, 200 et passim; Labaki, op.cit., p.159 et passim; etc.,etc.). It is strange that Sharārah, who has written several volumes on poetry and poets, does not see Abū Shabakah's Romanticism, manifest in his visions, his glorification of pain, his celebration of poetry and poets, his insistence on the simple life, his love of innocence and beauty, his emotional attitude towards life, people and events, his passion for nature, his artistic use of the effect of shock and contrast in his poetry and many other characteristics.

130. Afā'i, p.100, from his poem "Al-Dainūnah".

131. Compare with what Turnell says about Baudelaire: "The prostitute who degrades love is the symbol of those forces that are undermining modern civilisation." Op.cit., p.233.

132. Dirāsāt fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āṣir, p.71.

133. Ibid., p.133.

134. Ibid., pp.74-5.

135. Ibid., p.75.

136. Ibid., p.72.

137. Ḍaif's book has no date, but in his essay on Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbi he refers to Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad Karrū's book Al-Shābbi, Ḥayātuhu wa Shi'ruhu, which came out in 1954.

138. Afā'i, pp.84-5.

139. Ibid., p.47.

140. Ibid.

141. See ibid., pp.27, 31, 35, 50, 58, etc.

142. Ibid., p.50.

143. Ibid., p.52.

144. Ibid., pp.27-8.

145. Ibid., p.58.

146. Ibid., p.105.

147. Ibid., p.60.

148. Ibid., p.48.

149. See ibid., pp.28-9, 61, 87-90.

150. Ibid., p.52.

151. Ibid., p.97.

152. See Karam Milḥim Karam, "Yā Rafīq al-Shabāb", Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt, p.55; Fu'ād Afrām al-Bustāni, "Athar al-Binā' al-Lubnāni fī Ghalwā'", ibid., pp.39 and 40, and other writers.

153. Yūsuf Ghusūb, op.cit., p.35, explains the poet's various styles by the diverse influences from his readings which affected him, one after another; Abdullah Laḥḥūd, the poet's friend, however, rightly refers this to the various phases of his life and spiritual development op.cit., p.48 as well as to the deep conflicting tendencies in his basic character, ibid., p.49.

154. Such as "Al-Hassādūn", Al-Alḥān, Beirut, 1940, pp.8-9; "Alḥān al-Shitā'", pp.16-7; "Alḥan al-Ṣaif", pp.20-1; "Alḥān al-Qaryah", pp.24-5; "Alḥān al Ṭuyūr", pp.28-9; "al-Mi'ṣarah", pp.32-3; "al-Fallāh", pp.36-7. It is possible also to include two other poems here "'Urs fī'l-Qaryah", pp.48-9 and "'Īd fī'l-Qaryah", pp.52-3, although the first is an adaptation of wedding folksongs and the second is more like ordinary children's song. "Yā Bilādī", pp.60-1, is more like a national anthem than anything else.

155. W.W. Greg, Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama , London, 1905, p.6.

156. Al-Alḥān, p.8.

157. Ibid., p.25.

158. Greg, op.cit., p.7.

159. Al-Alḥān, p.24.

160. Although he worked in the capital, Beirut, he insisted on living in his village, Dhouq Mīkhā'īl, see Razzouq, op.cit., p.212; Ra'īf al-Khouri, "Abū Shabakah fī Lubnāniyyatih ", Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt, pp.63-4.

161. Al-Alḥān, p.41, from his poem "Nahr al-Ṣalīb".

162. Ibid., pp.44-5.

163. Ibid., pp.56-7.

164. Op.cit., pp.209 and 211.

165. This tradition, seen in earlier folk-poets such as Rashīd Nakhlah, discussed above, was propogated greatly throughout this century, and is in great vogue now.

166. Greg, op.cit., p.13.

167. Ibid., p.7.

168. It is an article entitled "Al-Adīb wa 'l-Arḍ" said by Razzouq, op.cit., p.206, to have been published in Al-Makshūf periodical, No.314, 1941, p.1. It is an attack on the city which has defiled morals & given greater importance to material things, and a glorification of the simplicity of country life.

169. Op.cit., p.206.

170. Op.cit., p.70.

171. See the preface to Ghalwā', Beirut, 1945.

172. M. Nu'aimah seems to share this opinion, see "Shā'ir yaghmis qalamahu fī qalbih", Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayat, pp.24-5.

173. Ibid., p.152.

174. Ibid., pp.103-4.

175. Ibid., p.25; see also Razzouq, op.cit., pp.168-9 in which he says that the poet drew an exaggerated picture of Ghalwā'; see also Abū Shabakah's article quoted in part by Razzouq, p.166, from "Al-Ma'riḍ" periodical, No.934, 1931, in which the poet tries further to differentiate between the real girl in his life and the heroine of his poem.

176. As told by his friends G. Ghurayyib, op.cit., pp.103-4; and F. Ḥubaish, op.cit., pp.153-5.

177. Ghalwā', p.14.

178. Ibid., p.13.

179. Ibid., p.69.

180. Ibid., p.80.

181. Ibid., pp.43-4.

182. Ibid., p.26.

183. Ibid., p.28.

184. Ibid., p.30. N.B. The paradox in "nūr al-dujā".

185. Ibid., p.51.

186. Ibid., p.65; see also p.69.

187. F. Ḥubaish, op.cit., pp.152-3.

188. Ila 'l-Abad, second edition, Beirut, 1963, p.50.

189. Nidā' al-Qalb, second edition, Beirut, 1963, p.60.

190. Judud, p.231.

191. Mujaddidūn, p.114.

192. Nidā', p.53.

193. Ila 'l-Abad, p.30; see also ibid., p.58.

194. Ibid., p.65.

195. Nidā', p.37.

196. Ibid., p.36.

197. See Ila 'l-Abad, pp.37-9.

198. See Ibid., p.37.

199. See ibid., p.30.

200. "Baudelairean Themes: Death, Evil, and Love", Baudelaire, a Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Henri M. Peyre, Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, 1962, p.175.

201. Ila 'l-Abad, p.38.

202. See Luṭfi Ḥaidar, op.cit., pp.118-9; Razzouq was able to prove that his lovely poem "Anti lī", Nidā', pp.30-2, was written for her, see op.cit., pp.243, 246-7 for his plausible argument.

203. See the following poems in Nidā': "Anti lī", "Uḥibbuki", pp.40-1; "Ard al-Mī'ād", pp.37-9, "Ka'sān", p.34, "Al-Nāsikah", pp.23-7, etc.

204. Op.cit., p.40.

205. Dimaqs, p.158.

206. Ila 'l-Abad, p.10.

207. Ibid., p.27.

208. See ibid., pp.39, 56, 65, 67, 77 and other places.

209. Ibid., p.44.

210. Dirāsāt wa Dhikrayāt, p.190.

211. Nidā', p.21.

212. Ibid., p.17.

213. Ila 'l-Abad, p.43.

214. There is no doubt that there is a connection between the love stories of the Umayyad love poets and Abū Shabakah, for they seem to fascinate him. He speaks of them to his beloved in Ila 'l-Abad, pp.54-5; but he was also interested in famous Western love stories; see his reference to the story of Tristan and Isolde, ibid., pp.69-72. The Arabic and the Western stories insist on the purity of the love relation.

215. He seldom wrote on an abstract idea. His poem "Al-Inā'" which revolves around some abstract ideas, was published in Al-Qaitharah but was included again in Nidā', pp.7-12, and seems out of context with the poetry of the volume. It is interesting to note that this poem was chosen by the Egyptian periodical Al-Risālah, No.562, 1944, p.316, from Nidā', and published with an introduction praising it. See also Razzouq's interesting comment on this choice, op.cit., p.246. The influence of Mahjar poetry with its love of abstract ideas is well seen in this poem.

216. A posthumous volume of poems of occasion was published in 1959 at Beirut entitled Min Sa'īd al-Ālihah. Most of its poems are elegies on other poets. It does not embody his best poetry but one cannot fail to notice the sincerity and emotional involvement in most of its poems.

SECTION 4: AL-TIJĀNI OF SUDAN

The poetic roots of modern Sudanese poetry seem to be strong and rather dissimilar, in certain aspects, from the poetic roots of other Arab countries.[1] Many causes account for this dissimilarity. The Sudanese poetic background seems to have been greatly enriched by strong heroic and mystic influences alive in both folk and formal poetry. The folk poetry in the Sudan should be a very interesting field of study, for it is certainly very rich and deep rooted in history, having been alive as a poetic heritage for many centuries. Being the poetry of the emigrant Arab tribes who had preserved a great part of the aspects of the old Arab culture,[2] this folk poetry was, at the beginning, greatly heroic, bent on singing the old Arab virtues of chivalry, hospitality and courage.[3] But with the spread of mystical tendencies among the people in the sixteenth century, this poetry acquired important mystical qualities.[4] M.I. Shūsh says that the Sudan had been isolated culturally from the Arab world. This isolation he insists, lingered until the beginning of the first World War.[5] The cultural isolation of the country led to the "appearance of religious, social and linguistic traditions characteristic of Sudan alone, and separated from the trends found in the Arab world after its modern renaissance."[6] Shūsh describes these traditions and mentions the domination of myths and popular beliefs found in some cultures older in Sudan than Islam,[7] and the mixture of genuine Islamic attitudes and beliefs with pre-Islamic local religious traditions. This should be a very interesting field of study for the anthropologist, for it seems that the personality of the religious leader-healer has been transferred to the Moslem Sheikh and a whole class of holy sheikhs "shuyūkh al-ṭarīqah" grew up in the villages.[8] This and other influences led to popular mysticism, and it seems that a strong sufi current was dominant in the Sudan and played a great role in the life of the Sudanese. Naturally,

it found expression in the chants and facile songs of the people.[9]

On the other hand, Shūsh insists that the isolation of the Sudan allowed the Sudanese, especially the Bedouin tribes, which are of Arab origin, to preserve their ancient tribal customs and traditions as well as gave opportunity for the preservation of the language from becoming adulterated.[10] Shūsh must be talking here of the Classical Arabic and not of the tribal dialects which have undergone many changes and acquired some aspects of other local languages.[11] In the Classical language, it is especially the qualities of strength and virility that must have been preserved in the language, for there seems to have been no signs of seediness or effeminate qualities in the modern Sudanese poetry written in the Classical language at the turn of this century. The poetry of traditional poets like Muḥammad Sa'īd al-'Abbāsi (1881), 'Abdullah al-Bannā (1891), 'Abdullah 'Abd al-Raḥmān (1892) and others is terse and powerfully phrased and shows very strong Classical roots. Muḥammad al-Nuwaihi noticed this quality in these earlier poets but did not try to connect it with its cultural roots.[12] However, it is a very important element and deserves a special study for those interested in the development of linguistic traditions.

Formal poetry, i.e. the poetry written in the Classical language is not as old in the Sudan as the folk poetry. 'Ābidīn, draws a graph of* the development of poetry in the Sudan, both folk and formal, and elucidates the development of this poetry showing its trends, varieties and limitations. His study might be regarded as an excellent supplement for Shūsh's study of the traditional poetry in modern Sudan, for the latter did not explore quite as much the roots and background of Sudanese poetry nor the heritage of the living folk poetry in Sudan. Neither of them,

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* The graph shows that folk poetry dates much earlier than the sixteenth century, that sufi poetry (folk and semi-Classical) dates from the sixteenth century, that conventional formal poetry only started to be written in the nineteenth century and that poetry to which modern innovations have been introduced only as recently as the twentieth century.[13]

moreover, explored its possible connections with modern Sudanese poetry. On the other hand, Muḥammad al-Nuwaihi neglected any substantial reference to Sudanese folk poetry or any thorough study of heroic and mystic trends in Sudanese poetry, both folk and formal, in the nineteenth century. This is a regrettable omission of vital sources of strength in this poetry, which lie at the basis of the modern contribution. The same omissions occur in 'Ali Abū Sa'd's book on modern Sudanese poetry.[14] Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ramādi, however, in his book Dirāsāt fi 'l-Shi'r al-Sudāni,[15] wrote a short essay on mysticism in Sudanese poetry[16] but did not elucidate it sufficiently, nor did he illustrate it with sufficient examples from former Sudanese sufi poetry written in Classical Arabic so that one could visualise the line of its development.

Sudanese poetry, therefore, furnishes a rich and, compared with other literary fields, a less familiar field of study. However, it is not possible to examine Sudanese poetry fully in this work. In the first place, any responsible study of this poetry has to take into account the trends and special qualities of the folk poetry because of its predominance and vital importance and its influence on the formation of the poetic imagination of poets growing in its tradition.* In the chapter on Lebanese poetry, especially the section on al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr, a direct reference to and comparison with Lebanese folk poetry was necessary, but was also possible to accomplish because of the present writer's familiarity with the Lebanese folk poems and the Lebanese dialect . However, it would be extremely difficult for the Arab reader to understand the Sudanese folk

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* It is interesting to notice that, although the imagery and general involvement of the traditional poetry written at the turn of this century are not alien to those in traditional Arabic poetry in general, as Nuwaihi noticed, a great change in them appears in the poetry of recent poets such as Ṣalāḥ Aḥmad Ibrāhīm in his volume Ghaḍbat al-Hababāi, Beirut, 1965, Ṣalāḥ Ibrāhīm writes in free verse. The final liberation from the conventional poetic tools has given scope to his other influences to appear and take hold of important elements in his verse. A critic is immediately confronted with a different kind of poetry, based on traditions some of them decisively different from poetic traditions in the Arab world. One suspects here the presence of strong influences from Sudanese folk poetry itself. Through an authentically Sudanese background, a line of universality appears in Ibrāhīm's poetry.

poetry without a specialised study. The Sudanese folk poet Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bek 'Awaḍ al-Karīm Abī Sin, known as al-Ḥārdillu (1830-1917), who is highly regarded by the Sudanese, has an interesting collection of folk poems written in the Sudanese dubait, a verse form used in folk poetry in many parts of the Sudan.[17] However, it is only through the translation into the Classical language of its verses that the Arab reader is able to understand and enjoy these poems, some of which, like those on the hunting scenes, are quite original.[18]

In the second place, because of the isolation of the country and its belated participation in the modern poetic revival of the Arab world only few Sudanese poets were able to impose themselves on the Arab reader and on the modern poetic scene. Most of these began writing in the fifties and after. Before that decade, the name of al-Tijāni Yūsuf Bashīr, (1912-1937) , has been able to gain recognition in the Arab world. He has never arrived at the fame and influence of poets like al-Shābbi, for example, with whom he is often compared,[19] but his poetry is interesting from many points of view.

Al-Tijāni came from a religious family with Sufi affiliations.[20] His very name, "al-Tijāni" was given to him by his father after al-Tijāni, the leader of the Tijāniyyah Sufis.[21] He studied first at one of the khalwas[22] which are equivalent to the kuttābs in other parts of the Arab world, then at al-Ma'had al-'Ilmi in Ummdurmān, which seems to have taught only literary and linguistic studies at the time.[23] Al-Tijāni, moreover, is described to have read greatly in Classical literature[24] including sufi,[25] as well as in modern Arabic literature produced in Egypt, al-Mahjar, Syria and Lebanon.[26] He did not know any foreign language and like al-Shābbi, he read some Western literature in translation.[27]

Two events in his life which his biographers mention may account in part for the wistful tone which dominates some of his poetry. The first was his expulsion from al-Ma'had al-'Ilmi probably on account of a

literary argument in which al-Tijāni, in an impulsive mood, declared that Shauqi's poetry compared to the language of the Quran.[28] This shows the extreme fanaticism of the mentalities which held positions of authority in the educational institutions of the country. The second event was the tragic illness, tuberculosis, which emaciated him slowly and eventually killed him at the early age of twenty-five.[29] However, his poetry is remarkably healthy compared to the unhappy state of mind which must have taken hold of him in the last years of his life. The longing for death, the utter despair seen in some of al-Shābbi's poetry, the sentimental sorrows which dominated the poetry of less tragically afflicted poets in Egypt at the time, are not present in any excess in his poetry. His poem "Fa 'ḥtafiẓhā Dhikrā" written to a friend when al-Tijāni was very ill[30] is not a poem of despair, but ends with a positive cry of hope:

31 فالشفـاء الشفاء يا رب والعفـــو و زدها قوى اذاها الوثـــــاق

There is a strong Islamic abandon in the last verse in the following piece:

32 وحنايـــا معروقـــة وعيـــــون غائـــرات ورجفة ومحـــــــا ق
مالنا دون ذا احتيـــــــال فـــــان الله في علمه الشؤون الدقـــا ق

Al-Tijāni began writing seriously when the call for the innovation and liberation of Sudanese literature had already begun. A bitter battle between traditionalists and avant-garde poets was raging[33] in the late twenties, which continued through the following period, and critics like Ḥamzah al-Malik Ṭanbal[34] were directing their attacks on the defects of the traditional literature and were calling the poets to reflect the facts of Sudanese life: this was a mild critical movement in which al-Tijāni himself participated.[35]

There is variety, colour and depth in al-Tijāni's poetry. Romantic literary influences, a life devoid of actual emotional experiences, personal disappointments, bad social and political conditions,[36] a fatal illness, a deep love of beauty, a mystical trend spontaneously inherited from his

own cultural background, and a highly sensitive nature, all combined to give a decisive Romantic colour to his poetry. However, his strong Classical linguistic roots which arise, not only from his own education but also from the basically strong linguistic roots of the Classical culture in the Sudan, had a stiffening effect on his poetry at times and stood in the way of a complete Romantic liberation of his diction and expressions. Many of his verses are heavy with awkward, archaic words:

37 مضى بك العقل لم تسعد به اشـــرا ... واعتادك الشك اذ ضاقت بك الســـوح

ودعت ،امس يقيني فـــي مـودأة ... غبراء تعصف في اعماقها الريـــح

تكسرت شمس دنيا القلب وانطفـأت ... في عالم الروح من نفسي المصابيـــح

ويحي وويح الهوى المقبور ليس له ... رجعى وقد اوغلت في القباريـــح

لا اعرف اليوم الا انه لـغـــد ... باب تمرّ على مغلاقـه يـــوح

*

The lovely image embodied in the last verse of the poet's day as being nothing but a passage for the sun and the rest emptiness, is completely spoiled by archaic and obsolete words he used. This is a major defect in al-Tijāni's poetry and probably lies at the basis of his relative obscurity in the Arab world. Its roots lie in the strict Classical education in the Sudan, a country where the poetic mannerisms and fashions of Arabic poetry in the age of decadence did not find a real place and whose poetic connections until modern times were made mainly with the Classical heritage. We have seen how the Lebanese poetic experiment in the nineteenth century, despite the presence of a true linguistic renaissance in Lebanon, did not escape the infection of the embellishments and defects of pre-renaissance Arabic poetry. But Lebanon was not isolated as Sudan was during the days of decadence, and was at the heart of poetic and literary events taking place in the area. However, the decadent trends in the early nineteenth century poetry, although they delayed and hampered the poetic development in the Arab world, did achieve a certain softening

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* Where "muwadda'ah" is the wilderness and "yūḥ" is the sun!

of the poetic language and did help to shed away the uncouthness of some of the Classical poetic diction and its archaic Classical usage.

Al-Tijāni, therefore, was handicapped because of his strong Classical background, a great contrast to al-Shābbi whose handicap stemmed from the fact that his background could not furnish him with a strong literary and linguistic basis on which to lean. Had al-Tijāni been able to liberate himself from the excess of the Classical hold on his poetic diction, the following beautiful image of young boys at the khalwa dozing off in the middle of lessons, would have been most heart-catching, but his use of words like "irjahannat" partly spoils the effect:

38

ونفوس سجـــى الكرى في حواشيهـــا ودبّ الفتـــور في الارواح
فارجحنّت مهومآت وما تـــــبرح مركـوزة على الالـــــــواح
كلما لفها النعاس واضفـــى فوقها عالما ندى الجنـــــاح
قصف الرعد في المكـان ودوى مرزما صاخبا قوى الصيـــــاح
فاستفاقت وهينمت بعض اشيـــاء وعادت . . وعاد قصف الريـــــاح

The virility of the linguistic basis and of al-Tijāni himself shows in his alliterative use of "ḍ", a rather uncouth letter if repeated too many times, in the following:

39

انـت يا نيل يا سليل الفراديـــس نبيل موفق في انسيابـــــك
ملء اوفاضك الجلال فمرحـــــــى بالجلال المفيض من انسابـك
حضنتك الأملاك في جنة الخـــلد ورفـــــت على وضـيّ سحابـــك
وامـدت عليك اجنحـــة خضـــرا واضفـــنت ثيابهـا في رحابـــك
فتحدرت في الزمـــان وافرغـــت على الشرق جنـــة من رضابـــك
بين احضانـك العـــراض وفي كفيـــك تاريخـه وتحـــت ثيابـــك

His sufi background does not seem to help much in polishing his diction, an astonishing phenomenon because of the highly polished language of sufi poetry on the whole and its tendency towards choice diction. But he adopts many sufi words and does occasionally use symbolic or general mystical language. He is also influenced by the sufis in his pantheistic yearnings and in what his verse reveals of an inner, constant thirst for beauty and perfection. Nuwaihi noticed his excessive use of words denoting the flow of soothing cooling water or dew,[40] words like

"نبـــع ", "فيـوض ", "الرطـب ", "رافـق ", "ريـانة ", "روت ", "الندى ", "رفـق ", etc., all from one poem.[41] This reminds us immediately of Badawi al-Jabal's great fondness of such words.[42] Badawi al-Jabal's mystical influences have been discussed above. The same influences must have been at play on al-Tijāni, a fact which Nuwaihi neglected in his study of the poet. But those sufi influences cannot be overlooked for they are quite pronounced in al-Tijāni's poetry. Ibn al-Fārid̤'s poetry abounds with constant references to thirst, dew, light, wine and other words denoting fluidity and soothing coolness:

43 سقتني حميّا الحب راحة مقلتي وكأسي محيا من عن الحسن جلـــت

and:

44 واها الى ماء العذيب وكيف لـــي بحشاى لو يطفي ببرد زلالـــه
ولقد يجل عن اشتياقي مـــاوءه شرفـا فوا ظمئي للامع آلـــه

The symbolic reference to wine is used by al-Tijāni very luxuriously in his elegy on a young beloved. Standing at her grave he exclaims:

45 هنـا جمـال الحيـاة يطـوى هنـا عيـون الهوى تنـــام
هنا سهـام القضـاء نشـوى وها هنا طاسة وجـــام
اصاب رمّاحـــه واشـــوى فعوجل الشـرب والمـــدام
وهذه كأســـه تـــروى من حمرها الارض والرجـــام

The references to light, so abundant in al-Tijāni's poetry, are used as a compliment to his use of words like dew and water. He manoeuvres them in such a way that they harmonise completely:

46 بعض انداءه فيوض من النـــور ونبع من قـوة خلاقـــة

This use is in stark contrast to Badawi al-Jabal's use of soothing, thirst-quenching images of water, dew and other similar references in antithesis to his symbols of the desert, thirst, mirage and scorching heat. Al-Tijāni's relation to Sufi poetry in this is manifest in the following by Ibn al-Fārid̤.:

47 اوميض برق بالابـيرق لاحـــا ام في ربـى نجد ارى مصباحـــا
ام تلـك ليلى العامريـة اسفـرت ليلا فغـيرت المسـاء صباحـــا

and:

48 لها البدر كأس وهي شمس يديرهـــا هلال وكم يبدو اذا مزجت نجـــم
ولولا شذاها ما اهتديت لحالهـــا ولولا سناها ما تصورها الوهـــم

Again Nuwaihi noticed al-Tijāni's great reference to light, brilliance and other words denoting light but did not connect it with his sufi influences. Both light and dew, in his opinion, symbolise al-Tijāni's longing for illumination and tenderness with which "he longed to fill the ideal world he created for himself,...and also express the kind of deprivation which he suffered in his real life."[49] His explanation of the circumstances of the poet's life (the roughness of his society in its hard political and economic conditions[50] and his unrequited longing for love)[51] as the factors that account for his longing for gentleness and illumination as symbolised by the dew and the light, overlooks greatly the strength of the sufi poetic traditions which must have influenced him. This is the more strange because Nuwaihi is aware of the mysticism in that part of his poetry which deals with the poet's longing to God.[52] Nuwaihi even quotes this significant verse:

53 ظمأ في النفوس لا رىّ الا في ينابيعه الى الانبيـــــاء

without realising that some of al-Tijāni's poetic language and his whole imagination lean greatly on sufi poetic traditions.

Iḥsān 'Abbās sees in al-Tijāni's mystical trend a Romantic symptom which showed itself also in the Mahjar and other Romantic poetry.[54] But al-Tijāni's mystical trend, it must be remembered, is spontaneous in his poetry, and not induced by a general Romantic tendency. This is why words of symbolic, mystical affinity come so naturally in his poetry:

55 فسلبت الهدى وعوجلت في النور وقد كنت صادقا في هدايـــــا

where light here symbolises faith and the knowledge of God. Here again he uses the same symbol:

56 واقرأوا حولية المعونة الكبـــــبري وذروا عليه بعض البـــــذور
وعلّ هلّم انظروا سياجا من النـــور على مهده الوطيء الوثيـــــر

'Ābidīn noticed al-Tijāni's constant reference in his love poetry to beautiful eyes.[57] This is another sufi usage again seen occasionally in

Ibn al-Fārid:

58

وقد علمـــوا اني قتيل لحاظهـــــا فان لها في كل جارحة نصـــــل

and:

59

ما بـــين معترك الاحداق والمهـــج انا القتيل بلا اثم ولا حـــــرج

Al-Tijāni's love of beauty in general is deeply connected with his great love for God's beauty, imbued in him, not only by his particular make-up, but also by his sufi background. It is idle to quote from sufi poetry on this, because it is the core of that poetry. But one need not go too far in trying to find external reasons for a poet's deep love and great longing for beauty. In poets like al-Tijāni in whom the longing for beauty is obsessive, the truest explanation is probably the simplest: the poet was simply a great lover of beauty and the aesthetic. Neither the explanation of deprivation nor that of mystical influences will furnish sufficient reasons for the presence of such a deep, unquenchable thirst for the beautiful. Some weight must be given in his case to conflicts due to the torments of a soul deprived of actual, requited love. But this deprivation, nevertheless, is not the main reason behind the depth and richness of his poetic personality, nor behind his acute aesthetic sensibility, which was brought into fulfilment by his sufi education.[60]

The obsessive craving forbeauty lends, of course, a devotional emphasis to his poetry:

61

وعبدنـــاك يا جمـــال وصغنـــــا لك انفاسنا هياما وحبـــــــــا
ووهبنـــا لك الحياة وفجرنـــــا ينابيعها لعينيك قربـــــــــى
وسمونا بكل ما فيـــك من ضعف جميـــــل حتى استفـــــــاض واربـــى
وحبوناك ما يزيدك يا لغـــــز وضوحـــــا وانت تفتـــأ صعبـــــــــا
وذهبنا بما يفســـــر معنـــــاك بعيـــــدا وانت اكثـــــر قربـــــــــا

and so does his great spiritual bent. But emotional and sensitive, he never succumbed to sentimentality of any kind, thus excelling over Ibn al-Fārid himself who can be very sentimental and melodramatic. Al-Tijāni's poetry is given an intellectual stiffening by the depth of his metaphysical meditations, and by the interesting conflict between faith and doubt:

62 اشك ، يؤلمني شكي وابحث عن برد اليقين فيفنى فيه مجهودى

This seems to have been a true conflict with him, for he has many references to these doubts and a battle between faith and reason was going on all the time:

63 في النفس حاجات وا ن خفيت فلعلها ضرب من السوك
والعقل ينصب من حبائله نصبا معاقدها من الشوك
انا في فؤادح ما تجر يدى ابدا قتيصة ذلك الحبك
ما زلت اقطعه ويعقدني والمرء بين قلاقل ربك

This last fine image is sophisticated but marred by his use of awkward words such as " قلاقل ربك".

When he is reconciled to faith, he becomes so mystically inclined at times that a pantheistic conclusion is attained, and like Ibn al-Fārid who said:

64 تراه ان غاب عني كل جارحة في كل معنى لطيف رائق بهج

he also sees God in everything. ʿĀbidīn particularly chooses these verses:

65 كل ما في الكون يمشي في حناياه الاله
هذه النملة في رقتها رجع صداه
هو يحيا في حواشيها وتحيا في ثراه

God being all, His Beauty, alive and shimmering, gives its qualities to all beauty on earth. Al-Tijāni did not seem to perceive the vulnerability and finality of human beauty as al-Shābbi did but treated it, usually as an absolute, a part of the eternal Beauty of God. However, a wistful metaphysical approach appears occasionally when he talks about other topics:

66 يا قلب لا كالقلوب يدفق فيك الالم
ترمي وراء الغيوب عينا تحس العدم

The same perception is seen in his comment on the new born babe:

67 كأنه يصرخ ان الموت بالشمس علق
او انه يعرف ان الضوء في الافق اختنق

Time, too, seems to have a pressing urgency on him; there is great compression, rarely found in Arabic Romantic poetry, in the following in which he is addressing his soul:

68 الله ايتها الوديعة ان تشط بك الظنون
الفجر ملتهب الجوانب والدجى شرس حرون
يتزاحمان اليك في ولع ،وتستبق القرون

These lines excel in their melancholy beauty and are most symbolic of the quick passage of time. A feeling of wonder is touched in the following verse by a sense of the tragic that arrives at the universal:

69 اوفى على الارض مأخوذا وطاف بها مشرّد النفس لا مـــــال ولا جـساه

His expression "اوفى على الارض مأخوذا" is fine and deeply expressive of his basic love of life, and unending wonder at it. What strikes in this superior verse is the fact that it is not metaphorical but poignantly telling of a whole life-history. These solo lines in al-Tijāni's poetry show a calibre that only great poets have. One feels certain that far greater poetry would have been written by this poet if he had lived longer. At twenty-five, he was already in full awareness of the tragic and vital in the human condition.

The diversity of his poetry is a refreshing change from the usual traditional themes of poetry, as well as from the limitation of the two themes common in the thirties and forties, love and nationalism. The emotional urgency in his poetry, which is its greatest liberation, is balanced by a natural serenity and depth which give it weight and interest. Although he resorted occasionally to a sufi approach and often to much sufi diction, he was greatly disinclined to accept stereotypes and stock responses and he remained a poet with a distinct individuality. What marred his poetry was primarily the awkwardness of much of his poetic language, a defect which could have been rectified by healthy modern criticism had the span of his life been longer.

FOOTNOTES

1. ʿAbd al-Majīd ʿĀbidīn, Tārīkh al-Thaqāfah al-ʿArabiyyah fi 'l-Sūdān, Cairo, 1953, says that it began with the entry of the Arabs into the Sudan but does not specify the approximate era, p.173.

2. Ibid., p.175, where he specifies the pre-Islamic culture.

3. Ibid., pp.173 & 184-7.

4. Ibid., pp.180-4.

5. Al-Shiʿr al-Ḥadīth fi 'l-Sūdān, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1962, p.11.

6. Ibid., p.12.

7. Ibid., p.13.

8. Ibid., pp.13-4.

9. Shūsh, ibid., p.14 describes it as simple poetry; ʿĀbidīn, op.cit., p.175 et seq., describes how this poetry was written to be sung.

10. Op.cit., p.15.

11. For the changes in the Arab dialects see ʿĀbidīn, op.cit., pp.19-21.

12. Al-Ittijāhāt al-Shiʿriyyah fi 'l-Sūdān, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, Cairo, 1957, pp. 3, 13 and 22; see also ʿĀbidīn, op.cit., pp.192-3.

13. See ibid., p.174, for the graph, see also pp.175-238 for a study of poetry, both folk and formal, in the Sudan prior to the twentieth century.

14. Al-Shiʿr wa 'l-Shuʿarā' fi 'l-Sūdān, Beirut, 1959.

15. Cairo, n.d.

16. "Al-Taṣawwuf fi 'l-Shiʿr al-Sūdāni", pp.155-60.

17. Al-Ḥārdillu, Shāʿir al-Biṭānah, edited by Al-Mubārak Ibrāhīm and ʿAbd al-Majīd ʿĀbidīn, second edition, Khartum, 1958, p.19.

18. It is interesting to note that, in his poetry on death, al-Ḥārdillu is quite conventional; see the section on death in his diwan, pp.98-103; however, his poem on himself on his death bed is quite original, p.102 and translation on p.103.

19. See for example Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad Badri, Al-Shāʿirān al-Mutashābihān, al-Shābbi wa 'l-Tijāni, Cairo, n.d., see also J. Ramādi, Dirāsāt fi 'l-Adab al-Sūdāni, pp.53-61.

20. Abū Saʿd, op.cit., p.70; Badri, op.cit., p.15.

21. Henri Riyāḍ, Al-Tijāni Yūsuf Bashīr, Beirut, [1962?], p.13.

22. Ibid., pp.19-21; and other references.

23. Ibid., pp.21-2.

24. Ibid., p.22; Nuwaihi, op.cit., p.63.

25. Riyāḍ, op.cit., p.30.

26. Ibid., pp.31-2; Nuwaihi, loc.cit.

27. Riyāḍ, op.cit., pp.32-3; Badri, op.cit., pp.15-6.

28. Riyāḍ, op.cit., pp.29-30.

29. Ibid., pp.35-7.

30. Ibid., p.36.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. See Shūsh, op.cit., pp.139-42.

34. See his collection of critical essays, Al-Adab al-Sūdāni wa mā yajib an yakūna 'alaih , Khartum, 1928; on him see Shūsh, op.cit., pp.145-57, (Shūsh holds him in high esteem); see also Nuwaihi, op.cit., pp.48-50; 'Ābidīn, Tārīkh al-Thaqāfah, pp.330-6.

35. On his ideas on poetry see ibid., pp.349-53; see Riyād, op.cit., pp.135-56, 164-75 for several articles on poetry which he wrote in different periodicals.

    Another critic in Sudan, Muḥammad Aḥmad Maḥjūb also participated greatly in this movement, but his critical booklet, quoted by several writers came out in 1941. It was entitled Al-Ḥarakah al-Fikriyyah fi 'l-Sūdān, ila aina yajib an Tattajih? (Khartum). On him see Nuwaihi, pp.50-9; 'Ābidīn, Tārīkh al-Thaqāfah, pp.341-9.

36. On these see Nuwaihi, op.cit., pp.18-9, 64-9, & 72; however, Nuwaihi reads more of social and political involvement in al-Tijāni's poetry than there seems to be.

37. From his poem "Wadda'tu Amsi Yaqīnī", Ishrāqah, fifth edition, Beirut, 1967, p.25.

38. From his poem "Al-Khalwah", Ibid. , pp.63-4.

39. From his poem "Fī Miḥrāb al-Nīl, ibid., p.109.

40. Op.cit., p.79.

41. Ibid., pp.79-80.

42. See above p. **379.**

43. Dīwān Ibn al-Fārid, Cairo, 1956, p.24, see also p.89 for several symbolic references to wine; and other places, e.g. p.87.

44. Ibid., p.79.

45. From his poem "'Alā Qabri Ḥabībi", Ishrāqah, p.108.

46. Nuwaihi, op.cit., p.80.

47. Op.cit., p.77.

48. Ibid., p.87.

49. Nuwaihi, op.cit., p.81.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., p.82.

52. Ibid., p.84.

53. Ibid., p.85.

54. Fann al-Shi'r, p.51.

55. From his poem "Al-Ṣabiyy al-'Ābid", Ishrāqah, p.26.

56. From his poem "Al-Zāhid", ibid., p.23.

57. Ibid., pp.26-7; see also Riyād's comment on this, op.cit., pp.90-3.

58. Op.cit., p.85.

59. Ibid., p.90; see also p.93 et passim.

60. The mystical trend in his poetry has been noticed by other writers on him; see Shūsh, op.cit., p.140; Abū Sa'd, op.cit., p.70; A. ʿĀbidīn, Al-Tijāni, Shāʿir al-Jamāl, second edition, Cairo, 1955, pp.33-3, et passim; Riyāḍ, op.cit., pp.72-3; but Riyāḍ thinks that sufism had only a fleeting influence on him; he is talking here of the influence of sufi ideas on the poet, but does not realise that his whole poetic imagination had been permanently influenced by his sufi education.

61. From his poem "Jamāl wa Qulūb", Ishrāqah, p.114.

62. From his poem "Ashukku Yu'limunī Shakkī", ibid., p.27.

63. From his short poem "Ḥairah", ibid., p.45.

64. Op.cit., p.91; see this and other places for the full elucidation of the theme.

65. ʿĀbidīn, Al-Tijāni, Shāʿir al-Jamāl, p.37; see also pp.32-8 for his discussion on al-Tijāni's pantheism and his comparison with extracts from al-Ḥallāj and Ibn al-Fāriḍ, etc.

66. From his poem "Qalb", Ishrāqah, p.31.

67. From his poem "Ṭifl", ibid., p.112.

68. From his poem "Nafs", ibid., p.60.

69. From his beautiful poem "Qalb al-Failasūf", ibid., p.22.

SECTION 5: OTHER ROMANTIC EXPERIMENTS

(i) The Romantic Trend in Syria

The Alawite poet Nadīm Muḥammad, regarded as Syria's first Romantic,[1] reached his poetic maturity in the fifties. The streak of Romanticism which runs through his poetry shows the influence of al-Mahjar and Abū Shabakah. However, he differs from all these because his poetry lacks the Romantic idealisation of woman, love and the poetic art, and all the glorification of pain in his first diwan Ālām (1953) gave way in his second diwan, Farāshāt wa 'Anākib (1955?) to a more pleasure seeking spirit. Shākir Muṣṭafa compares his poetry to Abū Shabakah's Afā'i 'l-Firdaus,[2] but this is a superficial comparison because Nadīm Muḥammad has nothing of Abū Shabakah's celebration of love or his enthusiasm for life, nor does he have his complexity and sophistication, nor his conflict. In Farāshāt wa 'Anākib he is rather realistic and mundane in his approach to love. He neither idealises woman nor condemns her, and although he is obsessed with his desires for her, he does not experience a true love for her. The diwan has no exultation or ardour, but a sustained desire for the flesh which does not centre around one particular woman.[3] In fact, N. Muḥammad reflects a different cultural background altogether. When compared with that of Abū Shabakah it is first and foremost seen in the former's lack of spiritual conflict with regard to woman and sex. The problem of sin is completely resolved with him:

4 ماذا علي اذا نحرت على دخان الاثم نوري ؟
اين الخطيئة في اغتراف المعطشين من النمير ؟

and this:

5 آمنت بالشهوات مبدعة وبالاسلام مطهر

and this:

6 عطشان ، ما هم الحرام اذا شربت من الغدير ؟
. . . . . .
هاتي يديك الى الحياة ، الى النسيم ، الى السرير
لا تنتظر ان ضيعت هذا العمر في مضغ القشور

There is too much raw life in the above examples and in verses like this with which the diwan abounds:

7 بشرى لك الدنيا ولـــــــي من فضل نعمتـــك السريـــــــر

He betrays here and in many other examples the naive experience of the suppressed provincial man. This is why he is more pre-occupied with the female body than with emotion of love:

8 سمـراء ؟ لا ،بيضـاء ؟ لا ما بيـــن بين لمـن يراهـــــا
في عبهـا صنـــــوان مـــن بـرد الحيـاة ومن لظاهـــــا

His contribution to modern Arabic poetry in Syria lies mainly in the fact that he freed poetry to some extent of many of its traditional themes and of the conservative style. He is one of the first Syrian poets to speak about personal matters without much involvement with the public scene.[9]

He was writing, as has been said, in the fifties, when the field of poetry in the Arab world was occupied mainly by a more modern and a more sophisticated kind of avant-garde poets. Despite the fact that he was able to get recognition in Syria, he remained little known in the Arab world which was then looking searchingly for other types of poetic experience.

Nadīm Muḥammad's poetry shows the effects of Syrian conservatism in style and phraseology, despite the change of emphasis and the resort to the personal theme. 'Umar al-Nuṣṣ, another Syrian poet whose poetry is even more Romantic than that of N. Muḥammad, shows even more than his colleague the effects of the Damascene school. His style is well-knit and his phraseology is powerful. The definite change in the poetic sensibility which his poetry reveals has not brought about any weakening influences on the structure. In his two diwans, Kānat Lanā Ayyām (1950) and Al-Layl fi 'l-Durūb (1958) he resorts to the traditional two hemistich monorhymed form, and chooses sometimes metres like al-ṭawīl which are very reminiscent of Classical poetry and hardly used, if ever, in avant-garde poetry in the fifties. Such Classicism, however, is only in style and form, for al-Nuṣṣ indulges in a sentimental Romanticism which reflects, not only a suppressed

emotional background, but also the effects of a belated Romanticism arriving in Syria after it had acquired, in the rest of the Arab world, some decadent streaks varying in strength and gravity. Writing in the prime of youth, al-Nuṣṣ is weeping over his life, youth, happiness and love:

اتبكي ؟ اجل ابكي وابكي ملاوة من العمر لم تزهر ولم تتنعم 10

His poetry is a very good example of Romantic dilution, especially in the element of emotion, and a great indulgence in sentimental sorrows. The images in most of his poems are crowded, often indiscriminately, to emphasise the depth of sorrow and despair. This became even stronger in his second diwan. He resorts often to an abstract personification of emotions which results in blurred, unconvincing images:

هواى هواى متى تشرئب فيقتلها ظمأ الموضع
تفر الى الفم تشكو الهوان فترجع بالرهق المفجع
انا الليل ، يا ليل ، اشوى الضلوع على غسق دامس مفزع
تمرد فيه ظلال الجحيم وتزجم اشباحها مخدعي 11

Some poems in Al-Layl fi 'l-Durūb yield to an excessive gloom and an exaggerated crowding of images with hardly any artistic background to support and elevate them. A violent image appears after another violent, gloomy image in his poems "Abwāb al-Layl"[12] and "Al-Layl fi 'l-Durūb"[13] which make very tiring reading and poor art. The following is a good example of this:

عجائز جن ينتحبن فجاءة فابصر في احداقهن طفولتي ..
ادق فتنهار السدود على الثرى ويدّافع الغفاش من كل وجهة
وتخرى استاروتغفر ظلمة تمر بها اشباح ارض مريبة
مواكب شتى تشرئب ظلالها فيعشرطرفي بالطيوف الملمة
يكاد الصدى المخنوق يصرخ في دمي فتشهق انفاسي وتوغل نظرتي .. 14

The whole poem is in this strain, with the single aim of describing the poet's gloomy, hopeless state of mind. His desire to accumulate as many figures of speech and metaphorical phrases as he can create results in an absolute lack of economy and condensation and in a distortion of sense.

The bad effect is accentuated by the abstract nature of his images. His poetry is a good example of the use of abstract imagery in modern Arabic poetry. There is a constant endeavour to use concrete images, but it fails because he does not produce a coherent picture capable of being visualised, and translated into an emotional correlative. Fragmentation of the image and a marked incoherence of the different figures of speech in one poem defeat the poet's purpose of producing a particular effect on the reader:

ونظرة بكماء .. مقهورة ... يلهث فيها الابد الموقر
اذا دنت ضقت بانفاسها ... كأنها في كبدي تزفر ..
المحها حولي ملتاثة ... فأترك الجفن بها يكدر
اخاف ان المس اغلالها ... فانكأ الجرح الذي ينفجر ..

His poetry, with its tendency to crowd violent images in the poem, confirms a trend that was getting stronger in modern Arabic poetry towards crowding a poem with too many violent images arranged in consecutive order. It has been mentioned above how Abū Shabakah in his two poems "Al-Qādhūrah" and "Al-Dainūnah" in Afā'i was not able to achieve a "correspondence between external and internal logic" and a harmonious co-ordination between his different metaphors; and it was mentioned that, in these poems, Abū Shabakah laid a precedence for what one may term "the poetry of the consistently repellent imagery" in modern Arabic verse. Shafīq al-Ma'lūf in 'Abqar also crowded his long poem with horrifying images.[16] Now 'Umar al-Nuṣṣ confirmed this trend in a large part of his poetry. This was a great contrast to Abū Shabakah who, while expressing emotions at a high level of intensity and even violence, was able, except in these two poems mentioned above, to preserve an aesthetic sense and a high artistic level, because he often leaned on the technique of expressing his emotions directly and candidly. He realised, quite instinctively, the value of relevance and co-ordination in the use of images.[17] In his poetry, as has been described, the image forms a picture of great vividness and vitality, closely related to the emotional state of the poet and directly effective on the reader.

The simplicity of the poetic language in poems that deal with experiences of high tension has been most effectively dealt with by G. Rylands in his book Words and Poetry.[18] To him simplicity is the keynote to the passionate and direct style, for "at moments of intense feelings, when repetition, particularly rhythmical repetition, is not uncommon, poetry and prose join hands ..."[19] This "elemental simplicity is not for continual use in poetry, but ... for sudden moments, when the prose order of words will tell most strikingly".[20] This secret of good poetry has escaped al-Nuṣṣ, as it has escaped Shafīq al-Ma'lūf in 'Abqar, and as it was going to escape many poets in the fifties and after who have made a cult of the use of a great number of constantly repellent imagery and of metaphors of great physical revulsion, as will be described.

However, there is no doubt that, although the poems of al-Nuṣṣ suffer from such grave faults, he has many lovely verses and half verse:

القلـوع البيضى في اليمّ وارض تتـــــراءى
واكف تحمل النـار .. وتهدى الغربـــاء [21]

'Abbūd noticed his originality in certain images but overlooked the weakness of the majority of them.[22] However, he did notice the poet's inapt use of words at times,[23] for indeed al-Nuṣṣ does not show the fine choice of words which characterises his older compatriot, Badawi al-Jabal. Some of his words are quite archaic: " ونجم اناديه اذا جـن عيلمي ",[24] and others are pedantic and unnecessarily unfamiliar: " الف قزعـــة ترقش الافـــق ",[25] where there is no poetic reason to use such ugly, unfamiliar words as qaz'ah and tarqush; they neither explain the meaning, carry a poignant connotation, or add any emotional effect to the poem, but, on the contrary, repel and alienate the reader.

Al-Nuṣṣ, however, is at his best in his love poems. In some of these there is a real elevation of emotion, a chivalry and a tenderness which is of a rare quality.[26] Moreover, in his love poetry he seems to have

something more substantial and real to talk about, and the ideas and notions in these poems are not forced and affected. In his other poems, especially those that aim at a philosophical theme, a forced philosophy seems to prevail. In his poem "Al-Ṭarīq ila 'l-Lāh"[27] an attempt at a metaphysical approach fails to convey to us at the end any real revelation.

The experiment of al-Nuss and Nadīm Muḥammad is a good example of the predominance of Classical methods in Syrian poetry, for Romanticism did not arrive in Syria except at a belated date, because of entrenched Classicism, and when it arrived, it did not have the chance of a full expression of its effects on form and style because of the same reason. This means that an important poetic movement in the Arab world has spent its vigour without the Syrian creative talent taking a leading part in its development. It will be shown shortly that another current in modern Arabic poetry, Symbolism, has taken place simultaneously, also without the Syrian poetic creativity being able to participate vigorously in its development. Would this be due to the traditional balance in Damascene poetry of which 'Abbūd speaks with mild admiration?[28]

(ii) A Romantic Poet in Palestine

Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān and 'Abd al-Raḥīm Maḥmūd were poets of realism in Palestine. If their glorification of heroism in national strife has a streak of Romanticism in it, then this streak is the healthiest one in Romanticism, because it is one of celebration, strength and determination. But a Romanticism rather of an escapist, gloomy tendency seems to have taken hold of their contemporary, the poet Muṭlaq 'Abd al-Khāliq from Nazareth (1910-1937). His collection Al-Rahīl published posthumously in 1938[29] shows clearly the deep effect of al-Mahjar Romantic poetry on him. It is rather astonishing that Asad, who discusses his poetry[30] in a book dedicated to poetry in Palestine and Trans-Jordan, fails to trace this Romanticism in his poetry or to refer to the Mahjar poets as this poet's direct forerunners.

Muṭlaq's poetry is of particular interest to this work because it is the first example of the Romantic trend in Palestine, a trend which, in the thirties when the poet was writing, was already strong in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia after having flourished in al-Mahjar. Compared with his contemporary poets in Palestine, the difference in poetic sensibility is astounding. This is even more enhanced by the fact that the poet studied solely in Palestine. We know that Ṭūqān's early poetic education was directed towards the neo-Classical poets of the older generation in the Arab world. His reading later of the English Romantics was not enough to establish a change of sensibility towards a Romantic attitude when his poetic attitude had already been formed. This rather realistic attitude, moreover, might well have suited his natural temperament. As for Maḥmūd, we know very little about the details of his early education, but we do know that his father was a poet of the conventional school. He may well have directed his son towards the Classical poets of whom Maḥmūd became very fond, or at least furnished him with volumes of their poetry. Muṭlaq completed his secondary education in al-Rauḍah college in Jerusalem. We know little about the details of his poetic education there, although one can at least suggest that it was in line with the literary education in the other few non-missionary colleges in Palestine, and perhaps emphasised a more Classical poetic education in the class-room. However, we know that Muṭlaq was an avid reader.[31] We also know that the Mahjar literature as well as that currently written in Egypt was read in Palestine.[32] Muṭlaq must have become very well acquainted with al-Mahjar poetry, for his poetry shows direct links with several Mahjar poets, notably Fauzi al-Ma'lūf and Abū Māḍi. In his adaptation to new attitudes hitherto unknown in Palestine, 'Abd al-Khāliq must have been helped by a natural temperament which was sensitive, introvert, pessimistic and idealistic.[33] The influences he absorbed from his readings in current Romantic poetry in Arabic, however,

he translated into more decadent elements. Muṭlaq distrusted man and his universe:

34 بني النـاس دنياكـم جيفـة وليس على ارضـكم ما يسـرّ

and this:

35 اعجـب ما في الحيـاة مضطـرب يختال في الكون غير مضطـرب
لا يصلح الدهر من مقاسـده الا ليسلمه الـى عطـب
واحسرتا للانـام من ضعـك يتم ـ مثل البكـاء ـ عن نصـب

and this:

36 صدق الظن واستبـان الخفـاء يا اخي هذه الحيـاة هبـاء
ومن الهون اننا مذ وجدنـا ما انتهينا .. واننا احيـاء

And Muṭlaq had a morbid love for death and fascination with it:

37 اوثـر الموت اثرة لا تجـارى واري في الحيـاة داء وبيـلا
اطلب الموت وهو ينفر منـي يا لتعسي ، هل اطلب المستحيـلا ؟

Death, in fact, is his beautiful maiden:

38 وجهتي الله ،والسماء طلابـي وكذا الموت غادتي الغيـداء

In his contempt of people and life he is reminiscent, very strongly, of Fauzi al-Ma'lūf in his poetry, especially his long poem "Alā Bisāṭ al-Rīḥ" discussed above.

A poem entitled "al-Ṭalāsim", is an attempt at combining several contradictions perhaps with a view to showing the essential unity of the universe, a Mahjar theme, and the paradoxical essence of life itself:

39 نحب ونكـره في لحظـة ونشقى ونسعـد في ثانيـة
ونرتاب في الا مـر حتى اليقيـن ونوقن في الريبـة الطاميـة
وابصارنـا لا ترى في الضيـاء وتبصـر في الحلكـة الداجيـة

These are spiritual and philosophical depths hence unattained in poetry in Palestine, and rarely elsewhere, showing a sensitive perception and a deep insight into the enigma of existence. However, the poem is almost spoiled by the way the poet handles it, for a dogmatic tone expressed in short, rather abrupt statements, dominates it.

Muṭlaq did not live long enough to leave an impact on the poetic development of his country. However, his experiment remains a phenomenon as it mushroomed in an environment still unsuited to it. For although the struggle in Palestine against Zionism and the British occupation did show many weak spots where men turned traitors, or leaders sought personal glory, and where the strife, the spilled blood and the heroic sacrifices were betrayed by evil forces, the general spirit in the twenties and thirties was virile and bouncing. Palestine in fact was involved in a physical and heroic struggle with the forces of aggression. There were many armed rebellions, and a general strike which lasted six whole months. This is an atmosphere of faith and determination, of strength and energy, and despite all the setbacks, cannot be conducive to despair and to a decadent wish for self-anihilation. We learn from his biographers that he himself took part in his country's struggle.[40] His poetry, in fact, has some poems in the Ṭūqān tradition of political criticism.[41] There can be no doubt that his personal temperament and probably his personal experience (he is said to have suffered from bad health)[42] have helped to determine his trend and leave him open to influences acquired through his readings in Romantic poetry.

'Abd al-Khāliq's poetry reflects a talented man of considerable promise, a promise cut short by his premature death. His death in turn prevented the current of Romanticism from spreading in Palestine. As the thirties passed the Romantic current was unable to find expression through any poet of 'Abd al-Khāliq's generation who all continued to write poetry in the Ṭūqān tradition of modern Classicism, most of them without Ṭūqān's particular talent. The Palestinian poets, long before the call for committed poetry was made, were writing some of the most committed poetry in the Arab world at the time.

(iii) The Romantic Trend in Iraq

A belated current of Romanticism arrived in Iraq at the end of the forties. The young generation of Iraqi poets, who were emerging in the forties had available to them poetry from other Arab countries as well as from the West, notably English. Both the Egyptian Romantic poetry and that of al-Mahjar were read avidly,[43] and in fact Iraq must have been then already a very good market for Arabic books for we know that it has been the best market in the Arab world for them since the early fifties.[44] As the young Iraqi poets of the forties fell under the influence of Romantic poetry written in both Arabic and English they were also getting acquainted at the same time with a more modern Western poetry. What happened to most of them was a unique experience in poetic development, for their spontaneous rejection of the strongly entrenched Classicism in Iraq, which came as a result of their new poetic contacts with more modern trends, expressed itself at the beginning in a Romantic poetry greatly drawn to sorrows, despair and indulgence in fancy, but with a deep yearning towards the ideal, the beautiful, the innocent and the unknown. These varied from one poet to another,[45] and although a Romantic trend persisted in the poetry of Nāzik al-Malā'ikah and others, it was short-lived in the poetry of most of the Iraqi poets. A line of strength, a factual grasp on the human condition and a jet of hope, faith and militant confrontation with the evils of Arab life were to dominate slowly the poetry of some of the most remarkable among the Romantics such as Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb and 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyāti, and to emerge in a neo-Realistic trend aligned to similar poetry in Europe. However,a few Romantic streaks were to persist in their poetry which would express themselves in such themes as the yearning to childhood and the village.[46] This will be discussed later on in this work. One feels therefore, that Romanticism as a full-fledged expression in Iraqi poetry was merely a stepping stone to greater poetic

freedoms in both form and content. It seems as if entrenched Classicism in Iraq could not actually be abandoned and superseded directly by more modern attitudes and methods, and had first therefore to resort to a Romantic liberation of both the form and content of poetry. This is a valid discussion on an artistic basis proven further by the fact that al-Jawāhiri, for example, despite his involvement in the condition of man in Iraq and his struggle for freedom and dignity, (an involvement similar to that of the neo-Realists of the fifties), did not succeed in liberating his poetry from the domination of Classical attitudes and methods, very probably because he never went through a true Romantic revolution in his poetry.

Iraqi Romanticism, despite its tendency towards despair and escapist sorrows, leaned on a strong basis of form and structure. The strong Classical foundation of this poetry proved itself capable now of being moulded and modernized. It has been described above how poets like al-Raṣāfi and al-Zahāwi could not cope adequately with new themes, and how their poetry suffered in strength when they deviated from familiar topics. But in the late forties the poetic tools in Iraqi verse proved themselves capable of dealing with variations of themes and nuances of meaning, as well as with newly introduced methods and forms, as will be discussed in a later chapter.

The most decadent streak in Iraqi Romantic poetry appeared in the poetry of Ḥusain Mardān (1927). He is an excellent example of the radical attitudes that were taking place in young Iraqis of the forties and after. A diabolism unmatched by any in modern Arabic poetry appeared in his poetry, and a complete rejection of social norms and moral attitudes.[47] Da'ūd Sallūm and Jamīl Sa'īd have a strong moralistic tone when they speak of his poetry,[48] but they fail to appreciate the boldness of his experiment. Moreover, his experiment was submerged quickly by the rise of the free verse movement in Iraq at the same time that he was producing his poetry, and by

the vehement controversy it produced in Iraq and elsewhere. However, Mardān's poetry deserves special mention because of its radical nature and the poet's capacity to express the most extreme emotions in well-knit, terse verses:

49

كـــم مـــرة تبـــت ولكنـــــني سرعان ما عـــدت لكفرانـــــــي
بي رغبـــة للشر لا ترتـــــوى يحدو بها للفتـك حرمانـــــــي
وددت لو اسطـيع في لحظـــة تحطـيم هذا العالـم الفانـــــي

The following is an example of the extreme diabolistic nature of his poetry:

50

قد رضعت الفجور من ثدى امـــي وترعرعت في ظـــلام الرذيلـــة
فتعلمـــت كل شيء ولكـــــن لم ازل جاهلا معانـــي الفضيلـــة

Mardān's first diwan, Qasā'id'Āriyah appeared in 1949 and stirred a great indignation among the people. Mardān was made to face the rigours of a law suit and the diwan was proscribed.[51] Unperturbed by this, Mardān published another diwan in 1950, Al-Lahn al-Aswad, in the same strain as Qasā'id 'Āriyah. His third, Rajul al-Dabāb (1952), caused him to go to prison.[52] In later years, he got more involved in general rebellious themes of a political nature, in line with the general trends of modern poetry. This and an adoption of free verse in contrast to the two hemistich form which he used in his former poetry, characterise his last diwan, Tirāz Khāss. In his former poetry he has been compared to Baudelaire[53] and there is a description of him as the heir to the Abbasid love poetry.[54] However, he is not the only poet in modern Iraq who wrote sensual, sex-obsessed poetry for al-Jawāhiri indulged in this too.[55] However, al-Jawāhiri's poetry possesses greater tenderness and depth and wider dimensions. Mardān is not able to avoid giving the impression of obscenity and of an unrelenting irrational rejection of everything. The change from a social hater to a social rebel, from a self-indulgent outlaw to a concerned angry man as effected in his last diwan is happily refreshing on a human level. On an artistic level his poetry loses greatly in originality, becomes more similar to other poetic contributions and much more conformist.

Footnotes

1. Shākir Muṣṭafā, "Al-Shi'r fī Sūriyyah", Al-Ādāb, January 1955, p.122.
2. Ibid.
3. See his descriptions of various women in Farāshāt wa 'Anākib, Beirut, [1955?], pp.48, 50, 56, 67, et passim.
4. Ibid., p.30.
5. Ibid., p.40.
6. Ibid., p.34.
7. Ibid., p.26.
8. Ibid., p.56.
9. See his poem "Shi'rī", ibid., p.19, in which he describes his poetic concept. See also ibid., for the social and political poems he wrote in the section entitled "'Anākib".
10. Kānat lanā Ayyām, Damascus, 1950, p.108.
11. Ibid., p.114.
12. Al-Layl fi 'l-Durūb, Damascus, 1958, pp.9-15.
13. Ibid., pp.92-5.
14. Ibid., p.11.
15. Ibid., p.109.
16. See above pp.152 and 623.
17. See I.A. Richards, Practical Criticism, London, 1929, p.196.
18. Second impression, London, 1928.
19. Ibid., p.26.
20. Ibid., p.27.
21. Al-Lail fi 'l-Durūb, p.83.
22. Dimaqs, p.168.
23. Ibid.
24. Al-Layl fi 'l-Durūb, p.119.
25. Ibid., p.87; for a criticism of his inapt use of words see 'Abbūd, Dimaqs, p.168; Naẓīr Zaitūn, "'Umar al-Nuṣṣ fī Dirāsah Jadīdah", Al-Adīb, January 1962, p.19.
26. See Sa'd Ṣā'ib, "'Umar al-Nuṣṣ, Shā'ir min Bilādi", Al-Ādīb magazine, November 1962, p.3.
27. Al-layl fi 'l-Durūb, pp.82-6.
28. Dimaqs, p.167.
29. It was edited by his brother, Ṣubḥī 'Abd al-Khāliq and published in Beirut.
30. Al-Shi'r fī Filasṭīn, pp.163-170.
31. Ibid., p.163.
32. Ibid., pp.74-5.
33. See the comments by M.S. al-Irānī, and al-Sheikh A. al-Qalqīli on his personality as quoted by Asad, ibid., pp.164-5.

34. Ibid., p.166.

35. Ibid., p.167.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., p.169.

38. Ibid., p.167.

39. Ibid., p.169.

40. Ibid., p.163.

41. See ibid., pp.169-170.

42. Ibid., p.169.

43. See above, pp.348-9 **et passim.**

44. As told to the present writer by several publishers in Beirut including the publishers of Dār al-ʿIlm li 'l-Malāyīn, Dār al-Ṭalīʿah and Dār al-Ādāb.

45. Some of the collections of Romantic poetry which appeared in Iraq at the end of the forties are Buland al-Haidari's Khafqat Tīn (1947), Nāzik al-Malā'ikah's ʿĀshiqat al-Lail (1947), ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyāti's Malā'ikah wa Shayāṭīn (1950) and Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb's Azhār Dhābilah, (1947). On the Romanticism of these poets see M. Ismāʿīl, Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, pp.54-6.

46. See also Ihasān ʿAbbās, Fann al-Shiʿr, p.51.

47. See his book in prose ʿAzīzatī Fulānah which is a collection of letters written to his sister, Nāhid Mardān, Baghdad, 1952. An extreme rejection of social and moral norms is manifest in this book.

48. Daʾūd Sallūm, Taṭawwur al-Fikrah wa 'l-Uslūb fi 'l-Adab al-ʿIrāqi fi 'l-Qarnain al-Tāsiʿ ʿAshar wa 'l-Ishrīn, Baghdad, 1959, pp.120-1; Jamīl Saʿīd, Al-Tayyārāt al-Adabiyyah al-Hadīthah fi 'l-Irāq, pp.91-4.

49. Saʿīd, op.cit., p.94.

50. Ibid., p.93.

51. Ibid., p.92; Sallūm, op.cit., p.120.

52. Ibid.

53. Saʿīd, op.cit., p.92; see also Tirāz Khāss, Sidon-Beirut, n.d. [but definitely in 1965 or after], the introduction, p.5.

54. Ibid.

55. For two examples only see his poems "Jarribīni" and "Al-Nazghah" in Dīwān al-Jawāhiri, III, 95-8 and 211-5 respectively.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RISE OF A SYMBOLIST TREND IN MODERN ARABIC POETRY

It has been said that the Symbolist trend in Lebanon began simultaneously with the flow of a strong Romantic current there. The causes why a Romantic movement in modern Arabic poetry was a natural development have been discussed, but no similar causes can be seen for the rise of the Symbolic trend.[1] While the causes for Romanticism in Arabic can be compared, in certain limited respects, with those of the Romantic movement in Europe, the artistic and social circumstances preceding the Symbolist trend in Arabic do not have much in common with the artistic and social circumstances preceding the European Symbolist movement. In France, Symbolism as a movement in poetry began in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and was the result of a sophisticated cultural, social and artistic development over the years. On philosophical and social levels it was "a protest against the bourgeois spirit of the nineteenth century",[2] the "bourgeois worship of activity and success",[3] i.e. "against positivism and materialism".[4] On an artistic level it was a protest against scientific Realism,[5] as well as a reaction against the Parnassians, who were "a school of hard pictorial realism, of rigid evocation, instinct with the objective spirit of modern science."[6] Its aim was "to achieve poetry in a purer state."[7] As a movement, it was "a part of the general process of the discovery of the implicit, which characterises modern thought."[8] It linked up with "Romanticism which had receded, but not died,"[9] and which had "prefigured" Symbolism and "opened the way for it."[10]

The Arabic Symbolist experiment neither had such a long development behind it, nor did it stem from any such artistic and social causes. Its rise might have been encouraged by the dissatisfaction which the

literary elite, educated in the modern Western tradition, must have felt in the face of so much rhetoric and utilitarianism which characterised, to some extent, the neo-Classical poetry, but its advent against such negative forces was not one of necessity, for Romanticism was trying to accomplish this task.[11] On the other hand, Symbolism in modern Arabic poetry was not a reaction to the "sentimentality and banality of the Romantic movement,"[12] as Karam states, for in the Lebanon of the thirties, at which time and place it flourished best, the Romantic trend in poetry had not yet spent itself in excess and decadence. It was in fact at its prime, and the greatest Romantic poet in modern Arabic poetry, Ilyās Abū Shabakah, was writing his best work in the thirties and forties when the greatest Symbolist poet in the Arab world, Sa'īd 'Aql, was writing his. Arabic poetry in Lebanon at that time was virile and progressing and did not really need a new kind of vitality to give it life.

At the same time the relation of Romanticism and Symbolism in modern Arabic poetry needs further clearing, for Romanticism seems always to carry the seeds of Symbolism.[13] In modern Arabic poetry, some Symbolic streaks were seen in the Romantic poetry of Gibrān and other Mahjar poets, as well as in such poets as al-Shābbi and al-Ḥamshari, and in semi-Symbolic poets like Amīn Nakhlah and Yūsuf Ghusūb, a fact which might mislead critics into believing that Symbolism in Arabic, like the French movement, had been prefigured by Romanticism. But a quick look at poetic events in the twenties will reveal that the first successful Symbolic poems, which were written by the Lebanese poet Adīb Maẓhar of the Ma'lūf family, were perhaps written in 1925,[14] before Romanticism had had a chance of becoming a strong and successful movement in Arabic, capable of prefiguring other movements. In fact, the Romantics who best showed Symbolic streaks with the exception of Gibrān and other Mahjar poets, had not yet risen to real fame in the Arab world. It seems then that Symbolism in modern Arabic poetry was not prefigured by Romanticism, but stemmed from other fields.

Seen in this perspective, the basic reasons for the advent of Symbolism into Arabic poetry seem to lie neither in the same complex social and psychological reactions which took place in the West, nor in a natural reaction to Romantic dilution and sentimentality or neo-Classical directness and exteriority. They seem to lie, rather, in the fact that the Lebanese talent was maturing simultaneously on all spheres. Cultural "fermentation" had been going on for a long time, and experimentation had been one of its greatest characteristics. Classicism, in its more traditional techniques, had never been allowed to entrench itself fanatically in Lebanon. There was always a certain amount of freedom which arose, perhaps, from the fact that Classicism to the modern Lebanese poets was merely a method of writing and was not a deep emotional link with a long Arabo-Islamic heritage. Moreover, these poets had been reared in a tradition of education which had been inoculated, for a long time, with Western ideas and methods, and although many of them carried some emotional streaks of Lebanese village provincialism, they were, culturally speaking, urbanised and sophisticated. They found themselves, therefore, capable of assimilating the highly sophisticated concept of nineteenth century Symbolism, and because of an emotional detachment with the Classical heritage, capable of transmitting it, to a degree.

The freedom these Lebanese poets had towards the sanctimony of the Arab Classical heritage was strengthened greatly in this century by certain regional influences which made it even more possible for them to be more adventurous in poetic experimentation. These influences centred mostly in the Phoenicean idea which was mainly due to the strong cultural and political links with the West, especially France.[15] The essence of this idea was that Lebanon had its own history and its own literature, and that Western literature was more capable of reflecting the inner life of the individual and his modern mind than Classical Arabic literature.[16] As a result of this concept Lebanese poets started writing poems on the

ancient glory of Phoenicean Lebanon.[17] This is significant here only in so far as it shows how Lebanese poets found it more easy, emotionally and culturally, to turn their backs on the Classical contribution and to try to strike firmer links with Western poetic trends.[18]

But this should not mean in the least that Lebanese poets were renegades from the Classical tradition in its more positive attributes. In fact, Lebanese poets writing at home, have been noted for their strength of phraseology and purity of style. One must keep in mind that Lebanese writers and poets of the nineteenth century had been able to cultivate an established tradition in linguistic studies and in style. They had been, moreover, the first liberators of modern Arabic prose. Their emotional freedom from too much bondage to the Classical heritage was important because it was an intelligent and informed freedom, and they knew how to manipulate it without loss to the strength of structure or to the beauty of style. Moreover, this freedom liberated them from some banal motifs which a deep emotional involvement with the Classical heritage might impose.

The phoenicean idea seems to be the only link the Lebanese Symbolic experiment had with motives which infringe on politics. As for social and economic causes, there seem to be none. It certainly was not, like the French movement, a movement against a bourgeois "materialistic tradition", as A. Symons puts it.[19] If any, the Symbolic experiment in modern Arabic literature has its roots in an elitist tendency which took its strength from Arab bourgeois cultural curiosity and ambition.

The Symbolic movement in Arabic poetry tried to adopt the doctrine of the nineteenth century French Symbolism without really delving into the essence of its philosophy. At home, it did not fully enter the main stream of Arabic poetry in the thirties, and penetrate the depth of the poetic sensibility of the Arab readers of that time, but remained a rather independent development, limited to a few exponants, until the poetic

movement of the fifties was finally able to utilise it for its own ends. The poets of the fifties were able to exploit the achievements of the Symbolic poets and use them as a part of a new movement with wider dimensions that involved to a great degree the question of the human conditions and of man's existence in an Arab world full of contradictions and dangers, as will be discussed later.

But before moving to describe the characteristics of Symbolism in Arabic it is interesting to say at this point that there seems for the observer as if a kind of race went on in modern Arabic poetry in order to bring it to a contemporaneous level with world poetry. The various poetic experiments in the West had all to be experienced before this contemporaneous level could be achieved. It was as if the poetic experiment in Arabic was compressing the achievements of many epochs into a few decades in order to arrive at this purpose. In its quest for contemporaneousness it experienced the same, or nearly the same, order of development of the main European movements : neo-Classicism, Romanticism, Symbolism and later on in the fifties, neo-Realism. However, this conclusion must keep in mind that the adoption of a poetic theory which might seem on paper as highly sophisticated and advanced as its Western counterpart might not always yield such ripe fruit when applied to a poetry not yet flexible enough for its application, when adopted by poets not capable of assimilating it profoundly and when directed to a reading public completely out of touch with the more sophisticated arguments and theorisations of art.

In the West, the central aim of the Symbolists seems rooted first and foremost in Mallarme's notion that "poetry should not inform but suggest and evoke."[20]

The Symbolists "proclaimed as their chief credo the ideal character of the world, the superiority of nonrational and intuitive perception over intellectual and scientific knowledge."[21] This protest was, therefore,

"mystical...a religion of Ideal beauty, of 'le Beau' and 'l'Ideal'."[22] It tried to "express evanescent perceptions of the senses and dim emotions - the subjective, the fluid elements of the mind,"[23] and since they believed that it was "vain to...explain an unknowable world"[24] in an "exact representation",[25] as the Realists tried to do, they sought to "cultivate strangeness, obscurity, dream like vagueness."[26] To them poetry should appeal to "secret desires and excitements,"[27] should express "the poet's inner vision through suggestive metaphors and fluid melody."[28]

The Symbolists relied much on the intrinsic value of the single word. Words have two qualities. The first is one of meaning. For, aside from the "definite, plain nucleus of meaning, the matter of fact sense evolved by social life under the strict, utilitarian law of intelligibility",[29] there lingers around each word "an aura of more vague and subtle significance".[30] This lies in its associations which have the "power to reverberate in the mind, awakening the echoes of numberless prior uses by the race, and by the speaker himself; stirring trains of thought, calling up other words and images."[31] This power is a "suggestive force...steeped in the subconsciousness of mankind."[32] It seems that "symbols are the instrument best fitted for the expression of shades of meaning and of elusive moods...."[33]

The second quality of words lies in their sound. It is the part which is "less definite and intellectual, more emotional and sensuous."[34] The Symbolists' "great regard for the musical element"[35] springs from the idea that music is "the most evocative of all arts...and the music of words is their richest evocative force."[36]

But the music of the single word must flow into a harmonious musical whole, and "rhythm and the melody that is born of the sequence of words"[37] became as important as the intrinsic music of the single word.

This led to a great interest in form which became "very carefully elaborated."[38] In metrical poems, "the regular beat of verse is broken

in order that words may fly upon subtler wings."[39] Free verse became a subject of "much theoretical discussion...in the circle of the symbolists."[40] But free verse was not "the only or the best innovation of symbolist poetry. The poem in prose[41] enjoyed a wide...vogue; a verse reminiscent of the Bible and of Pascal was revived and given a new splendor..."[42] The metrical innovations introduced by the Symbolists were, according to Peyre, "not claims to more facility, or to anarchic freedom, but a revolt against dead forms, a search for a new mould, as well as for a new idiom, in poetry."[43] Yeats carries this further by saying that "the form of sincere poetry, unlike the form of popular poetry, may indeed be sometimes obscure, or ungrammatical...but it must have the perfections that escape analysis, the subtleties that have a new meaning every day..."[44]

What change did the Symbolists look for in their poetry? They rejected the description of nature for the sake of description,[45] the moralising element in poetry,[46] the "appeal to the crowd,"[47] "the old bondage of rhetoric,"[48] "the old bondage of exteriority,"[49] "the anecdote and the brooding over scientific opinion,"[50] "the energetic rhythms which are the invention of the will..."[51]

The idea of Baudelaire's sonnet "Correspondances" seems to figure greatly in the central theme of the more famous Symbolists. "From that sonnet the essence of Symbolism was derived."[52] Yeats, with the typical clarity which characterises many writers in English, presents a clear interpretation of the concept of this sonnet, without referring to it: "All sounds, all colours, all forms, either because of their pre-ordained energies or because of long association, evoke indefinable and yet precise emotions,...when sound, and colour, and form are in a musical relation... they become as it were one sound, one colour, one form, and evoke an emotion that is made out of their distinct evocations and yet is one emotion."[53] For "all arts are parallel translations of one fundamental

mystery. Senses correspond to each other; a sound can be translated through a perfume and a perfume through a vision; each vowel suggests a color."[54] It is not possible to go into any critical discussion of the Western Symbolists here and the value of their ideas. The presentation of these ideas, however, is essential if the Symbolic experiment in Arabic is to be understood, and so is the presentation of their most outstanding characteristics.

The French Symbolists, through their painstaking experiment which has been "among the boldest in the history of literature,"[55] brought in an "enlivened sensibility," and "a proper regard for the sound of poetry."[56] They "encouraged a more precise use of words."[57] To many adjectives and nouns "a new and obscure but suggestive meaning was lent."[58] The use of words "as counters to produce a stock response"[59] was attacked. The syntax was even more revolutionary. The usual sequence of words [was] purposely altered or upset; orderly rhetorical development was carefully avoided.[60] This last point is extremely important for this work, because it has probably affected the style of both prose and poetry in Lebanon.

This method in French poetry produced an impression of strangeness and was quite obscure at times, but it also achieved for poetry "admirable plasticity and new effects of suggestion."[61] Another important characteristic of the Symbolists was their avoidance of the "elaborate comparisons"[62] of the Parnassians, and their omission "of the first term of the analogy" and their emphasis of the "second which became a symbolic image."[63] They avoided "explicit, clear-cut substantives," and they multiplied "adjectives and verbs which suggest subtle motion or delicate vibration."[64]

But a complicated technique like the Symbolist will definitely run into difficulties. Bowra sums up what he regards as the main defects of the Symbolist technique in two major points; firstly its severence from ordinary life,[65] and secondly the "enormous importance it attached to music."[66] But these were not the only major defects of this technique, for

often they carried their techniques too far in other fields. Sometimes they "disguised their meanings artificially, resorted to esoteric allusions and private associations, and opened up the way to much of the obscurity of contemporary poetry."[67] In their choice of words, they were intentionally "rare; many far fetched and over-precious words were coined; archaic words were revived"[68] and often the symbolists were "lost in the clouds of a rarefied atmosphere."[69]

The above resumé of the Symbolic experiment in France was necessary because the Symbolic experiment in Arabic, headed by Sa'īd 'Aql, was based directly on it. It will be comparatively easy now, as Sa'īd 'Aql's adventure is discussed, to see the points of comparison and similarity. The individual French poets were not discussed, despite the relevance of some of their individual ideas to 'Aql's theories, for lack of scope in this work, but a reference to their ideas will be made in the course of this discussion wherever necessary.

FOOTNOTES

1. Karam in "Madkhal", p.275 asserts that Symbolism in Arabic poetry, like Romanticism, was caused by political, social and economic conditions. The above discussion might help to clear this point.
2. Henri Peyre, "Symbolism", reprinted from Columbia Dictionary of Modern European Literature, ed. by Horatio Smith, Columbia University Press, New York, 1947, p.292.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., see also Wilson, Axel's Castle, p.19, where he mentions the "mechanistic view of nature" and the "social concept of man."
5. C.M. Bowra, The Heritage of Symbolism, London, 1943, p.3.
6. L.F. Cazamian, Essais en deux Langues, edited by Henri Didier, Paris, 1938, p.189, see also Wilson's interesting description of the movement, op.cit., pp.6-8.
7. Cazamian, op.cit., p.196.
8. Ibid., p.188.
9. Ibid., p.189.
10. Ibid., p.196.
11. Karam, Al-Ramziyyah, p.138, asserts that Symbolism in Arabic was a rejection of accepted traditional methods, of repetitiveness, and of decorativeness. Although repetitiveness was not really fought by Romanticism, decorativeness of the kind Karam spoke about (saj', tajnīs, etc.) was not an existing problem in the poetry of the twenties and the thirties, especially in the countries where a Symbolist trend imposed itself.
12. Ibid.
13. Wilson, op.cit., p.2, where he says that Symbolism was "a counterpart to /Romanticism/, a second flood of the same tide"; see also pp.10-1 for a very interesting description of the emergence of Symbolism in France.
14. Riyāḍ al-Ma'lūf, Shu'arā' al-Ma'ālifah, Beirut, 1962; p.15.
15. Karam, Al-Ramziyyah, p.146.
16. Ibid., p.137.
17. Ibid.
18. See Darwīsh al-Jundi, Al-Ramziyyah fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi, Cairo, 1958, p.438.
19. The Symbolist Movement in Literature, London, 1908, pp.8-9.
20. Bowra, op.cit., p.9.
21. Henri Peyre, op.cit., p.292.
22. Bowra, op.cit., p.3.
23. Cazamian, op.cit., p.189.
24. Peyre, loc.cit.
25. Symons, op.cit., p.4.
26. Peyre, loc.cit.
27. Bowra, op.cit., pp.7-8.

28. Peyre, loc.cit.
29. Cazamian, loc.cit.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Bowra, op.cit., p.8.
36. Cazamian, op.cit., p.190.
37. Ibid.
38. Symons, op.cit., p.7.
39. Ibid. Yeats, Ideas Good and Evil, London, 1914, p.177, spoke of "wavering, meditative, organic rhythms which are the embodiment of imagination."
40. Peyre, op.cit., p.293.
41. Cazamian limits himself to calling them "poetical prose", op.cit., p.190.
42. Peyre, loc.cit.
43. Ibid.
44. Op.cit., pp.177-8.
45. Ibid., p.176; Symons, op.cit., p.8; Bowra, op.cit., p.10.
46. Yeats, loc.cit.; Bowra, op.cit., p.8.
47. Ibid.
48. Symons, loc.cit; see also, Yeats, op.cit., p.177 where he describes this as "vehemence"; Foakes, The Romantic Assertion, p.24 for a further explanation. Bowra, loc.cit., where he describes it as frigid rhetoric.
49. Symons, loc.cit.; see also Yeats, op.cit., p.167.
50. Ibid., p.176.
51. Ibid., p.177.
52. Peyre, op.cit., p.293; see also Cazamian, op.cit., p.189; Karam, Al-Ramziyyah, pp.44-5.
53. Op.cit., p.169.
54. Peyre, loc.cit.
55. Ibid., p.294.
56. Bowra, op.cit., p.15.
57. Foakes, op.cit., p.179.
58. Peyre, loc.cit.
59. Foakes, loc.cit.
60. Peyre, loc.cit.
61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Op.cit., pp.12-4.
66. Ibid., p.14.
67. Peyre, loc.cit.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.

(i) A Mild Symbolist - Romantic Experiment

The name of Yūsuf Ghuṣūb (1893) is one of the most outstanding names to appear on the poetic horizon in the twenties. He launched his poetic career with Al-Qafaṣ al-Mahjūr (1928) a volume of experimental poetry so fresh and mature that ʿUmar al-Fākhūri hailed it in the introduction as a "poetic event of great importance, a fresh flower in these barren days, in the wilderness of our literary life."[1] Seeing the volume's Western affinities, al-Fākhūri asserted that Arabic poetry had no choice but yield to the forces of change and to the impact of foreign influences which were predominantly Western.[2]

Ghuṣūb completed his elementary and secondary education at the Jesuit College in Beirut.[3] His readings in Classical Arabic literature were few and "might be limited to the pre-Islamic poets, to some of the Mukhaḍramīn, (i.e. poets who wrote before and after Islam), and to some Abbasid poets."[4] Among the modern poets he read Khalīl Muṭrān.[5] As for his readings in French poetry he writes: "I read a great deal in modern French poetry and am acquainted with its schools and trends. However, when I write poetry, I do not tie myself to any particular trend but leave myself to my spontaneous impulse, neither seeking Symbolism, Surrealism, nor any other kind of poetry."[6]

Ghuṣūb may be regarded as a stepping stone between Romanticism and Symbolism, for he seems to combine the two trends[7] in some of his poems. He has the Romantic melancholy at times:

8

طفت فوق وجه شاحب متألـــــم ... كآبة نفس في اللحاظ تجـــــول
ثوت في حواشيها من الليل قطعـــة ... تخل بها الالحاظ كيف تميـــــل
ظلام بعيد الغور تجتاز ليلـــــه ... بوارق فكر لمحة وتـــــــزول
مكامن آلام وبؤس وهى بهـــــا ... فؤاد تجافاه الرجاء ،عليـــــل .

However, in his sadness as well as in his other emotions, although there is no conscious economy, there is a marked control,[9] very reminiscent of Muṭrān. None of the writers on him noticed this affinity between the

two poets, but his reading of Muṭrān to the exclusion of other modern poets seems to indicate a kindred spirit. Abū Shabakah's riches of emotions, his Romantic ejaculations, his engulfing sadness, his overwhelming anger, his exuberance in love are absent in his poetry.

Ghuṣūb is a Symbolist in his great regard for the musical element. However, his poetry does not depend on evoking and suggesting meaning. It is never foggy, but is often elaborated and tends towards clarity and directness [10] much more than Sa'īd 'Aql's poetry ever did.

Ghuṣūb's poetic diction is well chosen and tends to be rarified, another Symbolist trait in his poetry. There is a deliberate selectiveness and a conscious refinement of the poetic language "within the definition of Symbolic poetry."[11] 'Abbūd, too, extols its purity, simplicity and strength,[12] but despite the rare quality of his language he admits that his poetry is not very exciting.[13]

Ghuṣūb is also a Symbolist in the fact that his poetry seems to stem from a silent, contemplative self and not, as in the case of the Romantics, as a result of acute emotional excitement. The Romantic spontaneity is altogether missing.[14]

Most of Ghuṣūb's poems revolve on love. However, this love is a controlled emotion which never burns with the brilliance of the Romantics:

لذاتنا في الشوق لا في الوصال [15]

But his Symbolist involvement shows itself most in his mystical insistence on an Ideal Beauty,[16] although he does not arrive in this at the insistence and the irrationality of Sa'īd 'Aql who is a more authentic Symbolist.

Ghuṣūb introduced his first diwan, Al-Qafas, with the following verses:

هذي اناشيدي موقعة ... انغامها الحرى على كبدي [17]
لا حكمة فيها ولا عظة ... بل صورتي صورتها بيدي
حالات نفس في مسرتها ... اوفي كآبتها ولم ازد

This is an interpretation of the Romantic ideal in its indication of the spontaneous expression of emotional reactions to things. The verse: انغامها الحرى على كبدى with the intensity of emotion implied by the word 'حرى' and the connotation of 'love and suffering' implied by the word 'كبدى' in Arabic, gives a strong impression of an involvement with the Romantic experience. However, Ghuṣūb's practice as a poet and his concentration on the self is more like that of the Symbolists than the Romantics. As has been already said, there is that constant control which does not release the emotion in Romantic fashion. The self and its different states which he idealises seem rather superficial at times and rather monotonous, as 'Abbūd asserts.[18]

His approach to love is not as diversified as that of his greater contemporary, Abū Shabakah, but quite varied, nevertheless, portraying in Ghusūb's calm manner, many sides of the love relation: the joy, the longing, the disappointment, the requited passion. In this diversified experience we see the cultured urbanised man who can arrive at a metaphysical experience in his love, arriving sometimes at great simplicity when describing the experience of the Lebanese girl in love. In a poem like "Qalaq",[19] for example, a simple and familiar face is depicted, familiar because we see it in the Lebanese zajal as well as in the poetry of several other Lebanese poets, including al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr, and Sa'īd 'Aql. In such poems the experience is simple, sweet and innocent, never reflecting a complex experience. However, in Ghuṣūb's poetry, unlike that of al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr, there is sometimes a conscious suppression of the truly passionate. In the following there is a highly passionate and excitingly beautiful beginning:

20 تروح العذارى اذا مارنا اليهن في العيد او سلّمّا
سكّارى يتعثمهن الغرام فيقطفن .. بالحلم الانجما

but the elevation to a spiritual sphere in the last hemistich extinguishes the fire immediately. The sentence " فيقطفن بالحلم الانجما " is indeed

an anti-climax which depresses the flow of the reader's enthusiasm.

It is interesting to note Ghuṣūb's struggle with the traditional hackneyed images and his frequent capacity to rid himself of them. His poem "Al-Ghadā'ir" is a good example of his success in this sphere:

21

يا اريج الغابات يا نغم الشوق ... ويا نور مترف ريحان
سكرة الروح في شميمك والآفاق تهوى بطرفها الوسنان
يخطر الحلم في طليل من النور ... تهامى على صباح وان
ما خنوى في غمرة الطيب الا ... رعشة من هوى به ظمآن
واختلاج البنان ذكرى انهيار ... وتلاش في لذة النسيان
اى نهر حملت نفسي عليه ... يا شراع الشرود والبحران

The last verse particularly is very beautiful and fresh. However, he is not always so successful. In his poem "Al-Thaghr"[22] the beloved's lips are compared to rose petals[23] (a traditional hackneyed image) and to a ruby,[24] (another traditional hackneyed image). The fragrance of the beloved's breath is compared to the fragrance of apples,[25] similar to the traditional comparison with musk and amber. However, he tried to put such images in a sophisticated frame. He was perhaps a pioneer in certain images such as his comparison of the eyes to an oasis:

غريبة الالحان من واحة ... ضائعة في مهمه عبقرى 26

This was very fresh at the time, but has become hackneyed with use now. The comparison of the beloved's eyes to a garden: "حديقة ضجّ فيها الشوق"[27] is also original although it lacks in appeal.

Ghuṣūb also proved his Symbolist affinities by his avoidance of public and political themes which were becoming a cult in modern Arabic poetry: in the neo-Classical contribution and in some of the healthier Romantic, notably in the poetry of the South Mahjar and in al-Shābbi. In Ghuṣūb's poetry there is no appeal to the crowd, although it is not completely free from lapses into rhetoric:

28

مواكب من ذكريات توالى ... على الدهر في الفلك الدائر
تضمخ احلا منا العاطمات ... الى الغار بالنغم العاطر
يعانق فيها القديم الحديث ... ويحنو العظيم على الوادع
جبابرة المجد في ظلهم ... مشى الكون في فجره الطالع

Ghusūb kept to the traditional form but varied his rhymes sometimes. However he tried in many places to break through the impasse of the unity of verse in the two hemistich form, and used the enjambment: " التدوير ",

29

تضل المعاني بالفاظه ... وتشرد نفسي فلا اهتدى
الى فهمه ....

and this:

30

على غرة هام قلبي به ... واسأل نفسي ولا اعثر
على سبب . ان فهم الهوى ... على المبتلين به يعسر

and this:

31

ظليل تألق ، من عريه ... ومن ارج الشعر المرسل
تضمّخ . تغريك بالناهدين ... وبالثغر والفاتر المخمل

and this:

32

انادي لك والصيف في سكرة ... من النور ،والروض في مقصف
من الطيب ، والناضجات النشاوى ... دوان على الغصن لم تقطف
الا ندخل الروض نجتاحه ... بعنف فذقتم منه وفي
رياحينه نرتمي من عيا ... ونكرع من خمره القرقف

This enjambment, however, is not really successful because it is not very suitable to the two hemistich form. The monorhyme and the strict equalibrium of the two hemistich form make it rather imperative that the sentences be finished by the end of the verse, although it need not follow that the meaning should be completed, as has been the rule in "ʿAmūd al-shiʿr".

One can say that Ghusūb then was not faithful to a single style, but faltered between Symbolism and Romanticism as well as showed influence of the still living tradition of al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr with its new if

unadventurous themes of love, and its balance. A good example of this is his above mentioned poem "Qalaq" in which there is no trace of Symbolism and in which Romanticism is not strongly represented. Ghuṣūb stood at a cross roads, neither accepting the banal and conventional, nor achieving the original except rarely. In fact this middle way is Ghuṣūb's most characteristic feature as a poet, as 'Abbūd must have noticed, for he often refers to this middle position which Ghuṣūb occupies[33] concluding at the end that Ghuṣūb has few leaps and great poetry in his opinion is achieved only by /frequent/ leaps.[34] All through his different collections, very little change is detected.[35]

But there remains a great deal to learn from Ghuṣūb. He was one of the earliest poets in Arabic to free poetry, to a large extent, from stock responses. He might have been the first to ignore completely the social framework in which Arab poets had worked for a long time. He produced a good structure and knew how to purify and elaborate it. In this he is similar to Amīn Nakhlah and to Sa'īd 'Aql later on. He never said a poem according to demand, like his other contemporary poets.[36] He is the first poet to begin the tradition of art for art's sake, not only in Lebanon, but in Arabic poetry on the whole. Nowadays, although he is still comparatively active, he has been obscured by the emerging figures of greater poets and by the development of new trends and methods in contemporary poetry, but his role as a pioneer who introduced a different poetic sensibility and whose work marked a change[37] in poetry at the period must never be overlooked. It entailed courage, independence and originality, three qualities which no real poet can do without.

(ii) Adīb Maẓhar and the Rise of Symbolism in Lebanon:

The assimilation of Western culture has been going on so long in Lebanon that by the mid-twenties poets were already reaping a rich harvest. The mature, well distilled experiment of Yūsuf Ghuṣūb had been preceded by an even more complex and sophisticated poetic contribution. Adīb Maẓhar al-Ma'lūf (1989-1928) surprised the literary world in Lebanon in the mid-twenties with some Symbolic poems of a quality hitherto unknown in Arabic poetry. He had been writing earlier in the usual traditional fashion[38] until he got hold of the poetry of such French poets as Pierre Saman and Baudelaire.[39] The change that took hold of him can only be explained by two factors. Firstly by the realisation that a substantial readiness for change towards complexity and sophistication in poetry was already present in the poetic sensibility of some Lebanese poets and was awaiting the right contact which would furnish the actual example and model; and secondly that Adīb Maẓhar himself was a very gifted poet with a deeper sensibility and awareness than most. For in one short step he was able to cross over to an attitude towards life and towards man's condition on earth hitherto unprecedented in modern Arabic poetry. Not only did he write about an authentic experience of a deeper nature but he was able at once to relate his own experience, mood and attitude to the human condition in general. Death, as a much desired experience, is treated in his poetry in a most original fashion. It is not the factual death that is treated in traditional poetry with the usual kind of sorrow and traditional wisdom, but a deep, unquenchable desire for the soft black paw of death; a desire not really divorced from that of some Romantic poetry:

40 فيا شبح الموت اطفي برغدى بمخلبك الناعم الاســـــــــود

His was a strange and overwhelming fascination of death whose moaning is sweet like the blowing of black breezes:

41 فان تجواب عزيف المنـــون حلو كمر النسم الاســـــــود

Although he yearns for death in a way arriving near mysticism in some instances:

42

سئمتك يا نفس خلا غفـــوت ... قليـــلا مع العدم الراقـــــد
لقد صهرتك الليالي فمن لـــي ... بمهد الثرى الرطب البـــارد
. . . . . .
هنالك حيث تحل الامانـــــي ... غدائرهـــا وتنام الطيـــــوب
ترجمها نزوات الصـــــدى ... وتنشدها ظلمـــات الغيـــوب

one can discern the poet's tragic awareness of its presence in man's life. The whole approach is a great contrast to the poetry that was being written in Lebanon and the Arab world at the time and, compared with a later and more famous Symbolist, Sa'īd 'Aql, possesses greater depth, vitality and seriousness. Ilī Ḥāwi is right in greatly regretting the early death of this poet.[43]

Not only in Maẓhar's more existentialist approach to the idea of death, but also in his treatment of his subject does he differ from the Romantics. At his hands the poetic expression gains tremendously in obliqueness, subtlety and terseness. The Romantic dilution is absent, and there is a great adventure in a complex Symbolism. But his Symbolism concentrates, not on extreme polish and choice of words as in the case of later Symbolists of the thirties and forties including Sa'īd 'Aql and Bishr Fāris of Egypt, but on conveying obliquely and symbolically, a highly complex meaning vibrant with emotion, without losing the spontaneousness of the experience and its authentic relation to the depth of the human anguish. This is very different from the painstaking concentration on choosing words deliberately, and on following an Ideal of Beauty. This is a poetry of the human condition, more related in its use of symbols to the later poetry of the fifties than the poetry of the above mentioned Symbolists. For Maẓhar's symbols surprise and stun by their unexpected suddenness, but leave a deep emotional effect on the reader not very unlike the emotion experienced by the poet himself. There is a novel but magnificent approach in the use of language in the following:

44 فالليل سكران وانفاسه تلفح اجفاني واحلامي
تنساب حولي زفرة زفرة حاملة اكفان ايامي
بالله هلا نغم قاتم على بقايا الوتر الدامي
فان في اعماق روحي صدى مثل دبيب الموت بين الجفون

His images are most original for the poetry of the twenties as in the following:

45 وتصغي لها زرق النجوم مطلة ويجثو لها ما بين جدرانه القبر

One has to measure a poet's achievement not only in absolutist fashion, but also with relation to the poetic possibilities of his own generation. When Maẓhar says in the twenties such verses as the above and as the following:

46 تفر احلامي على نسمة نحيلة معسولة المبسم

one can see in the unusual use of words and their rebellion against the familiar order the beginning of a revolution in the poetic image and diction stopped before reaching maturity with the poet's premature death at the age of thirty. Ilī Ḥāwi has written a comprehensive study of Maẓhar's achievement and has tried to bring this original early Symbolist back to life.[47] In the development of modern Arabic poetry, however, Maẓhar does not figure as one would expect. He had written only a few poems in the Symbolist tradition, and his death, together with the rise of other major poets in Lebanon in the thirties, helped towards an unmerited oblivion of his achievement. But Maẓhar must be remembered now as the first poet in modern Arabic poetry to transfer to his poetry in a successful Symbolic experiment the existentialist sensibility of a highly gifted poet who felt in the depth of his soul the anguish, futility and despair that underlie human life.

Footnotes

1. Quoted by Ghuṣūb from the introduction to Al-Qafaṣ al-Mahjūr, in a letter to the present writer dated 2nd October, 1968; quoted also by Labaki in Lubnān al-Shā'ir, p.175.
2. Ibid., p.154; and the letter to the present writer, op.cit.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Labaki, op.cit., p.156; A. Karam, Al-Ramziyyah, p.145; 'Abbūd in Mujaddidūn, p.93, regards him as a chain between the old and the new.
8. Al-Abwāb al-Mughlaqah, Sidon-Beirut, n.d., p.124. This volume is a collection of sixty-one poems, thirty-five of which are selections from his previous three diwans, Al-Qafaṣ al-Mahjūr, Al-'Aūsajah al-Multahibah (1936) and Qārūrat al-Ṭīb (1947).
9. M. Ṣaqr, "Wathbat al-Shi'r al-Lubnāni", Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.68.
10. 'Abbūd, Mujaddidūn, p.78 even calls him a realist.
11. Karam, Al-Ramziyyah, p.140; Norin and Tarabay, op.cit., p.122.
12. Mujaddidūn, p.94.
13. Ibid.
14. Karam comments on the lack of spontaneity in his poetry, loc.cit.
15. Al-Abwāb al-Mughlaqah, p.147.
16. For a few examples see his poems "Jamāl", Al-Abwāb, pp.78-81; "Mutajarridah", ibid., pp.82-5; "Al-Thaghr", ibid., pp.86-7; "Al-'Uyūn", ibid., pp.88-90; "Al-Ghadā'ir", ibid., p.91, etc.
17. Quoted by 'Abbūd, Mujaddidūn, p.76.
18. Ibid., p.78.
19. Al-Abwāb, pp.94-5.
20. Ibid., pp.92-3.
21. Ibid., p.91.
22. Ibid., pp.86-7.
23. Ibid., p.86.

يا ثغرها يا ورقتي وردة حمراء ارواها ندى عاطر

24. Ibid.

يا توتة نادرة شفهـــا على لآل صائغ ماهـــر

25. Ibid., p.87.

يا ثغرها الريان يا فتنة قائمة من عهد حـــواء
اورثها التفاح طيبا على طيب وتخريرا واغـــواء

26. Ibid., p.88.
27. Ibid., p.90.
28. Ibid., p.110.
29. Ibid., p.95.

30. Ibid., p.96.

31. Ibid., p.99.

32. Ibid., p.100.

33. See Mujaddidūn, pp.76, 78 & 94.

34. Ibid., p.94.

35. ʿAbbūd, in Dimaqs, p.116 says that Ghuṣūb has developed in Qārūrat al-Ṭīb, but only very slowly.

36. ʿAbbūd, Mujaddidūn, p.95.

37. M. Ṣaqr, "Wathbat al-Shiʿr al-Lubnāni", Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.63.

38. Ilī Hāwi, "Adīb Maẓhar, Rāʾid al-Tajdīd fi ʾl-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi ʾl-Muʿāṣir", Shiʿr quarterly, No.5, Winter, 1958, p.77. For an example of his more traditional verse see his small poem, "Yā Arz", in Riyāḍ al-Maʿlūfʾs book, Shuʿarāʾ al-Maʿālifah, Beirut, 1962, p.16.

39. I. Ḥāwi, loc.cit.

40. As quoted by I. Ḥāwi, ibid., p.80.

41. As quoted by I. Ḥāwi in his essay, "Al-Ṣūrah baina ʾl-Shiʿr al-Qadīm wa ʾl-Shiʿr al-Ḥadīth", Al-Ādāb, February, 1960, p.55.

42. As quoted by him in "Adīb Maẓhar, Rāʾid al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi ʾl-Muʿāṣir", pp.79-80.

43. Ilī Ḥāwi, "Al-Ṣūrah baina ʾl-Shi r al-Qadīm wa ʾl-Shi r al-Ḥadīth", p.54.

44. "Adīb Maẓhar, Rāʾid al-Tajdīd fi ʾl-Shiʿ r al-ʿArabi ʾl-Mu ʿāṣir", p.82.

45. Ibid., p.81.

46. Ibid., p.82.

47. See his study of him, ibid., pp.77-92; see also his paragraph on him in his other essay, "Al-Ṣūrah baina ʾl-Shiʿr al-Qadīm wa ʾl-Shiʿr al-Ḥadīth", pp.54-5, where he speaks particularly of imagery in Maẓharʾs poetry.

(iii) A Major Symbolist

Sa'īd 'Aql (1912) remains the best interpreter of the French nineteenth century Symbolic theory in Arabic poetry. He comes from Zaḥlah, a small Lebanese town near Ba'labek in whose renowned school, al-Madrasah al-Sharqiyyah, he studied. This school had a tradition of strong linguistic and prosodical studies and it was at this school that men like Khalīl Muṭrān and 'Īsa Iskandar al-Ma'lūf studied.[1] 'Aql studied the Classical poetry and got acquainted with such modern poets as Shauqi and al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr.[2] This is in line with what other poets were studying at the time. However, he, through his personal endeavour, concentrated on reading the Quran as a literary text (he is a Christian) and on perusing the lexicons in search of rare and flexible words, which could be effective metaphorically,[3] and which embodied a musical element. These words, which he chose with deliberation, he used in his poetry, often with effect. This basis of study points to the conscious and early awareness of 'Aql of his poetic objective and of his deliberate pursuit of it. He soon became one of the best modern Arab poets to manipulate the single word, and had one of the richest vocabularies.

Besides the above mentioned sources of his education, the influence of the Bible as well as of Phoenicean historical legends prevails. His Biblical influences are seen in his adoption of direct Biblical themes for his first two volumes, Bint Yaftāḥ (1935), a drama based on the tragedy of Jeftah's daughter in the Book of Judges, and Al-Majdaliyyah (1937), a long poem of exquisite beauty based on the story of Mary Magdalene and her meeting with Christ. His Phoenicean influences are seen in his adoption of a heroic theme from Phoenicean legends, in the story of "Qadmūs", Prince of Tyre. Qadmūs appeared in 1944.

'Aql's influence by French poetry and poetic theory is too apparent to need reference. Karam, in his book on Symbolism, traced those influences

with studious application, and because of his lucidity of discussion and his exactitude, it is appropriate that his scholarly work be kept as a main reference on the subject. Labaki, too, has a good discussion on the subject,[4] and so does Ṣaqr.[5] In this work the best procedure would be to try to assess, as much as possible, Sa'īd 'Aql's place in modern Arabic poetry and his influence, not only on his contemporaries, but the more permanent and subtle influence he had on the generation of avant-garde poets who came after him.

'Aql rose to fame in the thirties and was able to sustain his importance, on a pan-Arabic scale, throughout the forties. However, in the fifties and sixties, although he remained a centre of literary attraction and literary noise, his actual importance had dwindled and he was overshadowed , to a large extent, by the new movement of poetry which repudiated much of his practice and theory. For not only did 'Aql's early robust creativity give way to repetition and monotony, but the very doctrine which he followed was destined to fall. The ideas of art for art's sake and pure poetry were exposed to the most vicious attacks by critics of the fifties and could not have a sustained existence in the modern Arab world. Neither the natural development of modern Arabic poetry, nor the general social, psychological and political conditions in the Arab world could support the practice of such a poetic doctrine for any length of time.

Sa'īd 'Aql began to write and lecture on poetry in the thirties. Most of his early lectures were not published.[6] He also embodied his ideas on poetry in introductions which he wrote to some of his works or to the poetic volumes of other poets.[7] The most important of his writings on the poetic theory might be perhaps his introduction to his second volume, Al-Majdaliyyah. He also has an important resumé of a series of lectures he gave in 1937 under the title of "Muḥāwalāt fī Jamāliyyat al-Shi'r".[8] The adherence to a Symbolist doctrine of aesthetics is clear in all these writings, in which is revealed a very strong echo of Abbé H. Bremond's

lecture "La Poésie Pure" which he delivered in 1925 at the French Academy,[9] as well as of Bremond's other famous work on the subject, Prière et Poésie which appeared in 1926. Moreover, some of Paul Valéry's and many of Mallarmé's ideas and concepts of poetry also appear in 'Aql's writings.[10]

To Sa'īd 'Aql poetry, unlike prose, is the result of the creative state which is unconscious.[11] In this unconscious state of mind, a sort of mystery prevails which gives birth to rhythm[12] and to the first utterances of the poem. In this state there are no emotions, or images or ideas,[13] for it is a state of purity over and above these elements,[14] in fact, it is a state of purity from any of these elements. Poetry is composed in pure calm, a calm in which these elements cannot clash, a calm in which the depths of poetry seem to merge, even to unite harmoniously with the truth of the universe.[15] This state in which the subconscious prevails over the conscious is extremely short-lived and can only last for one verse or a part of a verse.[16] In this idea, he is introducing into Arabic Valéry's idea that inspiration produces merely the first verse of the poem, the second verse being the result of one's own efforts.[17]

'Aql continues in the introduction to Al-Majdaliyyah to describe his ideas on poetry and creativity by saying that because the music of the poem dominates before the act of creativity, it means that the substance of poetry is music.[18] In this he leans heavily on the ideas of Bremond and Valéry with regard to the close relation between poetry and music.[19]

Mallarmé's idea that poetry should not explain but evoke, however, does not suffice 'Aql, and he calls it naive.[20] For, to him, evocation is a complex procedure, and depends on the multiple quality of the sound of words.[21] He is talking here of a symphonic use of words. The conscious tries to assimilate these multiple sounds, but fails, for consciousness is weak and superficial, and demands clarity and simplicity. Faced with the multiplicity of sounds, it tires out and leaves them free to address themselves to the subconscious.[22] Here he quotes Bergson as saying that the

objective of art is to put to sleep the conscious elements of our personality.[23]

Karam, after referring several of 'Aql's ideas on poetry to their origins in the writings of Bremond, Valéry, Bergson, Mallarmé, and others, concludes rightly that Sa'īd 'Aql's "creative scope in these concepts remains limited."[24]

But the advent of these ideas on poetry, as well as the attempt of 'Aql and other poets like the Egyptian Bishr Fāris, to apply them in poetry, did not arouse, as they would have done in the fifties and sixties, a wave of rejection and accusation. The thirties and forties enjoyed a greater tolerance.

Sa'īd 'Aql's Poetic Achievement:

If Western Symbolism, in its origin, was "a religion of Beauty" as Bowra called it, then Sa'īd 'Aql's poetry had striven over the years to achieve this goal. Although he did not really assimilate all "the philosophical heritage from which Symbolism arose in the West,"[25] there is a sustained effort to make of Beauty a cult and an object of reverence and adoration. An aesthetic rapture runs throughout his work arriving sometimes at what Bowra calls "religious devotion."[26] However, the "peculiar intensity" which the French Symbolists sought to give,[27] is not achieved in all his work, although he arrives at it sometimes. In order to accomplish the aesthetic objective he sought after, he, like the French Symbolists, "had to break with many familiar characteristics of poetry."[28] Like them, he avoided public and political themes. His strength, like theirs, lay in his "devotion to an Ideal" of beauty and of love. With the exception of Qadmūs, there is "no appeal to the crowd" in his poetry, and with the exception of his two plays Qadmūs and Bint Yaftāh, there is no attempt in his poetry "to serve ends other than the Beautiful."[29] Like them he had a great regard for the musical element, and he shared their weakness of severing poetry from common life.

Sa'īd 'Aql, however, is not a pure Symbolist in all his poetry. He

did not always succeed in adding mystery to his poetry by suggestion, for many of his verses, when understood, prove to be direct and often flat. His poetry, instead of growing with complexity and practice into a greater renderence of the Symbolic doctrine, grew more direct and clear with the years. And although he does not often resort to "preliminaries, explanations [and direct] comparisons"[30] there are, every now and then, prosaic joints in his poetry.[31] "The old bondage of rhetoric and the old bondage of exteriority," as Symons described them,[32] are not altogether banished from his poetry. Qadmūs is pregnant with rhetoric, as will be seen shortly. Moreover, description, which is one element which the Symbolists avoided carefully, is abundant in his verse.[33] He concentrates fascinatedly on the exterior appearance of beautiful women, and on the influence of that external beauty on the world of nature around those women. One can feel his sustained attempt to evoke beautiful things magically, but his poems are often too packed with description to leave much scope for evoked mystery.

Reading his poetry one has the feeling that the poet works very hard on his verses, sculptoring them with deliberate care and aesthetic scrutiny. But this dutiful waiting, to borrow Symons' words again,[34] on his words is not the mystical waiting on symbols with which "the soul of things can be made visible,"[35] but is rather an intellectual waiting on the details of structure: words, phrases, lines and the music of the verses.

Karam in his early book on Symbolism, discussed 'Aql's poetry and attempted a full analysis of his poetic attributes. However, he gave more meaning and profundity to 'Aql's poetry than it merited.[36] In his more recent work on modern Arabic poetry, Karam modified his views on 'Aql and, assessing him, said: "It may happen also that theory can dominate him. This happens often, in fact. [At these moments], his inner flow seems burdened and one feels as if the glow is extinguished, the breath

suffocated and the spiritual content imprisoned, so that the verses appear like musical dolls in which the tremor of feeling is muted...and beauty stands as a perfected architecture and a vocal /expression of/ wonder in which the scream is hushed and from which pain is banished. /The whole thing seems indeed/ to await a breath of life."[37]

Sa'īd 'Aql's most famous work is Al-Majdaliyyah. This long poem may be regarded as the best example in Arabic of a Symbolic poem based on nineteenth century French Symbolism. Before Al-Majdaliyyah, 'Aql had published his tragic play, Bint Yaftāh. In this play, his poetry shows a mixture of the Romantic and the Classical, and is studded with lyrical patches, showing immediately the basic tendency in this poet towards lyricism. But as a Symbolist, 'Aql is at his best in Al-Majdaliyyah. He distilled here his theoretical knowledge and applied it very carefully to a mine of chosen words. Al-Majdaliyyah, one must bear in mind, is not a great poem, as its author must have intended it to be. But it is one of the most charming poems in the Arabic language. The Symbolist concept that poetry is a musical interpretation of an idea is best exemplified in this poem, for the greatest part of the poem flows in a silky, rather intoxicating rhythm. "The calm of slow art"[38] is a good description of the atmosphere of this poem and of 'Aql's poetry in general. Aside from the mysterious and fascinating music in this poem, images, many of a purely Symbolist nature, abound.

Al-Majdaliyyah, as has been said, deals with the story of Mary Magdalene. Unlike Abū Shabakah's poems which deal with Biblical themes there is very little Biblical atmosphere in the poem. There is very little in all his poetry to support Karam's assertion that his poetry arises from "the darkness and asceticism of the Church."[39] For neither asceticism, nor darkness dominate this poem, or any of his works. In fact, Al-Majdaliyyah is a luxurious fountain of light and beauty. In its dedicated and calmly intoxicated glorification of Beauty, the poem

ignores the inevitable conflict between physical passion and spiritual abstinence, between purity and debauchery. I. Ḥawi is right in his assertion that Abū Shabakah would have treated this subject much more profoundly and would have laid his finger on the true crisis of conflict in the story.[40] The sublime horror which Abū Shabakah would have reflected gives way to a combination of admiration and adoration, a tone which persists in all his love poetry. Al-Majdaliyyah with all the potential wealth it carries as a story of the human and the Divine, of the extremes of sin and purity, is a flat poem with little emotional development, and with very little passion. His ability to strip Magdalene, when in the prime of her carnal sovereignty, of the naked sexuality and abysmal aspects of her position, is not necessarily one of poetic strength, but is rather one of emotional incapacity. Although his poetry springs from the heart of the Christian tradition in modern Arabic poetry, it does not render a great addition to it. His greatest relation with Christian themes is perhaps the aspiration of the central theme of his poetry for "grace and eternal beatitude," to use Erich Auerbach's term.[41] However, he seems to stop at the boundaries of his devotion for eternal and Ideal Beauty. Throughout his poetry, there is no Christian interpretation of life, no dualistic conflicts between body and soul, no interest in the central theme of redemption and the Passion of Christ, no serious approach to the question of the degradation of the flesh. Youth and beauty are never objects of corruption and sin, but the poet rather tends to spiritualise, glorify and worship them. However, there is in his poetry in general a kind of striving towards humility, a basic Christian attitude, seen in his own attitude to Beauty as exemplified in Woman, which is one of homage and glorification of the other. Another basically Christian attitude is that of Love as exemplified in certain passages in Qadmūs, where it is

altruistic and generalised,* as will be discussed.

In its basic theme, therefore, Al-Majdaliyyah does not have much which is not in common with 'Aql's other love songs which he was writing at the same time and continued writing later on. What elevates this long poem, therefore, is not primarily its theme, although the presence of the personality of Christ does lend it at times some kind of majesty, but a majesty that is equal to Magdalene's dignified beauty:

وتهادت اليه فالارض في الرعشة تلقى الجمال قرب الالوهـــــة 42

What elevates this poem in particular is the fact that Sa'īd 'Aql applied in it the cream of his ideas on poetry which he had just learnt from French sources as well as the fruits of his diligent application to the study of language and his conscious choice of the poetic diction. There is a freshness and a purity in his Symbolic application in this volume which is not found in abundance in his later work. His Symbolic craftsmanship here is characterised by the sheer purity of words, the gemlike choice of every syllable and the rare harmony of letters, syllables, words, colours, fragrance and all of Baudelaire's elements of "Correspondances"**

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* It should not follow that humility and altruistic love are solely Christian in their essence, but the present writer here sees a different nuance in their expression by 'Aql than is customary, for example, in Arabic poetry, a nuance which lies in a humility not supported by great passion, and a generalised love even in the face of the enemy.[43]

** There is no hint that 'Aql in his application of this idea in his poetry, has benefited from poets outside the French Symbolic heritage, for example from Ibn al-Fārid in his "al-Ta'iyyah al-Kubrā". However, there is in this long sufi poem a clear Symbolic trend which Karam brushes away in a few words without realising the proximity of its doctrine to modern Symbolism.[44] Karam says "We have mentioned these two kinds of Abbsid literature [one of them is the Mystical literature] not because we regard them as Symbolic, but because we appreciate their relations with some attributes of the Symbolic trend."[45] However, in Ibn al-Fārid's "al-Tā'iyyah al-Kubrā" the Symbolist concept of the "Correspondances" is beautifully portrayed. Witness the following verses:

46 فعيني ناجت واللسان مشاهـــــد وينطق مني السمع واليد اصفـــــت
وسمعي عين تجتلي كل ما بـــــدا وعيني سمع ان شدا القوم تنصـــت
ومني عن ايد لساني يد كمـــــا يدى لي لسان في خطابي وخطبتـــي
كذاك يدى عين ترى كل ما بـــــدا وعيني يد مبسوطة عند بسطتـــي
وسمعي لسان في مخاطبتي كـــــذا لساني في اصغائه سمع منصـــت

.../...

51

ان ترنم ،يمادى السر في الصوت ، ويشرب ـ ان تغف ـ رجع السكـــون

and this:

52

مبدع قالـت الجديـد يـــــداه ينشر الياسمين في الظلمـــــات

Like other Symbolist poets, he exploited the idea of using colour to denote a psychological state or a trait of character. This is immediately apparent in Al-Majdaliyyah which begins with this overture:

53 نغمـة آذنت وصحـــو اغـــــاه في محيا عيمان من نعمـــــاه
تتراءى فيـه الاماني زرقـــــاه وتغنى عبر الروى بيضـــــاه

These references to purity through whiteness[54] and to vastness through blueness (a reference to the vastness of blue skies, perhaps) is now an ordinary use in poetry, but it must have appeared interesting to 'Aql's generation. Of course, there is a latent Symbolism in Arab tradition both colloquial and Classical with regard to colour references. Phrases like " ناصع الذيـــل " or " يـد بيضـاء "[55] are familiar; and in colloquial there is an even richer usage, for it is customary to describe a man who is good-hearted as 'white-hearted', and to describe good or bad news as white or black news " خبر ابيض خبر اسود ". An elderly man with a persistent desire for women is described as green of spirit " نفسه خضرا ", and peasants in some parts of Palestine describe wet clothes as being 'green'. 'Aql exploited the colloquial use of 'green' to denote desire in Al-Majdaliyyah:

Here, the senses correspond to each other and a synthetic magic overwhelms the poet's experience. The concept of 'universal analogy' is beautifully portrayed in the following:

47 تراه ان غاب عني كل جارحـــــة في كل معنى لطيف رائق بهـــــج
في نغمة العود والناى الرخيـم اذا تألقا بين الحان من الهـــــزج
وفي مسارح غزلان الخمائـل فـــي برد الاصائل والاصباح في البلـــج
وفي مساقط انداء الغمام علـــى بساط نور من الازهار منتســـج
وفي مساحب اذيال النسيـــم اذا اهدى الي سحيرا اطيب الارج
وفي التثامي ثغر الكأس مرتشفـــا ريق المدامة في مستودع فـــرج

An idea which haunted Nu'aimah's mystical experience and that of Gibrān's. Darwīsh al-Jundi, in Al-Ramziyyah fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi, missed referring to the correspondence between the senses in Ibn al-Fārid, although he discussed his and other Mystic Symbolism.[48] He referred to "al-Tā'iyyah al-Kubrā[49]" without discovering the relevance of these verses to modern Western Symbolism. As for the phenomenon of mixing up between the senses in the poetic experience, he had referred to this in his discussion of Bashshār's poetry and compared it with Baudelaire's.[50]

56 عرف الناس نشوة الحب في نديان جسم مخضوضر اللذات

Not only his Symbolic employment of colour, but also his use of language is often dynamic, unusual and contains the element of surprise. This is of course in line with the Symbolist approach to syntax, and to originality and suggestiveness in words, as has been explained above. Sentences and phrases like these: " عانقوا الحلم "[58], "الفتة . . رفت عليهما "[57], "يشربان المساء"[62], " ينعم النبرة التفاتا "[61], " خفقة المطر "[60], " نبض الإسورة "[59], " عانقتك الافكار "[63], "لملمت لحظها "[64] etc. are very much in the Symbolist tradition. Sa'īd 'Aql seems fascinated with a particular paradox which becomes a motif in Al-Majdaliyyah as when he says: " رجع السكون ". Silence is for ever vibrating and echoing in this poem. In fact the original overture of Al-Majdaliyyah had started with this sentence" هدأة تمتمت ", an attractive expression which 'Aql chose to alter, among other alterations, in his second edition. His expression " تثاؤب السكون " in his verse: "وابانت عما يظن كلا ما فتأنى السكون والآن تاها"[65] is very poignant, for calm is made to slow down at hearing her words, the poet thus taking it for granted that it had been in quick motion. Perhaps 'Aql excels most when he refers to a clash that takes place in the essence of this silence and calm: " اهو هم الهموم جار على خدين حتى لفي الهدوء اصطدام "[66]. There is a further use of paradox in this poem, for from the lover's hoarse voice songs are plucked (N.B. the strange use of the verb):

67 قطفت بحة الحبيب نشيدا واستردت آهاتها اشعارا

and whiteness tinges with redness the brilliance of lewdness:

68 يطهر الطرف ان رآها على نير عهر مخضّب ببياض.

The use of paradox, which is "characteristic of metaphysical and much modern poetry"[69] is a natural but sophisticated expression of complex feelings where a tension which normally exists between opposing factors in a complex experience is great enough to impose itself on the poem. In the above examples, however, such a tension does not seem to exist, but a kind

of deliberate intellectual invention seems to be at work. This deliberation was noticed by I. Ḥāwi who also noticed the tendency of 'Aql to resort to grotesque exaggerations.[70] In fact, although the theme of Al-Majdaliyyah must be regarded as one of glorification of great Beauty, the exaggerated descriptions of her effect on the men of her times, because of the nature of their relationship with her which we all know from the poem, seem hollow and insincere:

71 سـجّد دونها الاعزة من روما ومن رهب فتحها ومناهـا
دميـة اشرقت على سرر الرفعة بين العبدان ،بين الشمـوع
سعف الغار دونها في انكسار وسنى التاج مطرق في ركـوع
قدستها العروش قدسها الناس وداست على قلوب الجميـع

This arrives here at absurdity, and does reveal a certain hollowness in the poet, which he is not able to rid himself of.

Al-Majdaliyyah contains many symbols of the simple kind, some of which are very beautiful. Magdaleneis described as the flower of pleasures "زهرة اللذائذ "[72] and Christ is strewing jasmines from his hands,[73] a reference to purity and gentleness. Again she is referred to by the image of a garden full of ripe fruit,[74] and her blitheness is referred to by wings which tread on air: " تطأ الارض كالجناح فضاء ".[75]

Karam, in his painstaking attempt to analyse 'Aql's imagery, speaks of the "dynamic nature of his images."[76] He is talking here of the fact that many of 'Aql's images denote some kind of motion:

77 تنقل الرجل في التراب جناحا تطأ الارض كالجناح فضاء

This is opposed to the static quality of many direct images especially similes, although a static quality is not necessarily present even in these. However, although many of his images are not static within the boundaries of the image itself but can vibrate with motion, his poems usually lack in movement and growth, and such images remain like imposed artificial ripples in a stagnant pool. His incapacity to develop the spiritual growth of his poems has especially hampered Al-Majdaliyyah and

given it the quality of a painting rather than that of a psychological and highly emotional story.

The deliberate application of Symbolism by 'Aql shows itself, moreover, in the fact that it eludes him in certain verses, and his basic Classicism appears in the clarity of images, and balance between form and content and between emotion and thought:

78 باحت المجدلية الآن ام صلت؟ وغابت مجنونة في الخيال
حدث مبدع الجمال آله الحب بالحب، طيبا، والجمال
ودعته الى المتمتع بالايام قبل الخريف، قبل الزوال[79]

This is seen even more frequently in his short poems.

It has been mentioned above that 'Aql has a choice and rich vocabulary. His poetic diction, however, has a sort of timeless quality about it; for it is, in its greatest bulk, neither particularly contemporaneous nor really antique, but much of it is novel in a Classical sense, if one may say so.

'Aql was able to use the single word and the phrase with various kinds of connotations. We find Quranic connotations in such phrases as "سجّد دونها الاعزة من روما"[80] "اصابعها العشر"[81] "ستر الغيب"[82] "نزهة للعيون"[83] etc. and we find some Classical connotations in such phrases and words, "ميسة البان"[84] "لماعا"[85] "رياها"[86] "سنى التاج"[87] "سجعة اليمام"[88] "نحن جار للعالمين"[89] etc. and some contemporary connotations in such a construction as:" زين الشباب".[90]

However, the most peculiar observation with regard to his diction is that he has many words with no connotations at all. These are words which he chose deliberately from dictionaries and which carried no connotations and no reference to experience past or present, i.e. with no emotional or intellectual history for the reader. Such words like the following: "سلسلة الحلم"[91] "جواء"[92] "اقتصفوا"[93] "اضحيانا".[94] These words, however, might create their immediate relationship with the reader because of their intrinsic value which lies

usually in their musical and textural appeal. This volume lies at the basis of the whole Symbolic experience of modern Arabic poetry. In it, as has been mentioned above, ʿAql gave the best fruit of his Symbolic doctrine. However the above details apply to much of his other poetry in Rindalā (1950) and Ajmalu Minki ? Lā (1960). But Al-Majdaliyyah excels over his other poetry also by the sheer majesty of its musical flow. The elusive reality of Beauty arrives at a more concrete realisation of itself in the fluid melody of the poem. ʿAql, in this poem, proves himself to be the master of certain magical effects of sound and rhythm. He had manipulated the sounds of vowels and consonants with the utmost skill exploiting their latent musical powers, and an atmosphere of suggestive, controlled awe and fascinating numbness dominates the poem, in quite unsurpassable fashion. ʿAql was never able to arrive again at this level of musical suggestiveness.

Rindalā came out at a time when people were already looking for something new in poetry. Its impact was nowhere near the impact which Al-Majdaliyyah had on readers. Its poems had been written between 1932-1949,[95] but ʿAql does not give the dates of individual poems, which makes it rather difficult to assess his development over the years.[96] The diwan consists mainly of love poems in praise of the beauty of several beloved women. However, neither the number of women, nor the slightly varying descriptions of their external appearances, give the reader a clue to the poet's own experience with them. The whole volume is a repetitive song of praise for their Beauty. ʿAbbūd was not able really to assimilate the Symbolist experiment of ʿAql, but he discerned the tepidity of his love emotions in these poems.[97]

Refuting the idea that ʿAql's poetry suffers from tepidity of emotion, Labaki asserts that its freedom of melancholy is no criterion for that, for it is a poetry of joy and health.[98] One can hardly agree with him here. ʿAql's poetry is a gentle song of praise which hardly arrives at

ecstasy. The glittering, breath-taking excitement of Abū Shabakah's love poetry in Nidā' al-Qalb and Ila 'l-Abad, his exuberant wonder at the beauty of his beloved and his great joy at his love for her can hardly be found in 'Aql's love songs.

For 'Aql is not usually talking to a woman of flesh and blood whom he loves with the totality of his manhood,[99] he is usually talking to a myth, a phantom too holy to be touched:

100 وقربك لي معبد لايمس يزار ويلمس من شاسع

Being impossible to attain, she is a dream:

101 ودعيني اهيم قربك لا ادرى الي انت ام لوهمي المريب

and a phantasy who never existed:

102 ليالي المغنين انت فقولي وجدت ام انك في المحتمل
هممت بان تخطرى في الوجود ولم تغلي فاعترته العلل

he accepts her as such and invites her to remain aloof, never to give:

103 وابخلي وابخلي الى يوم لا صحو لعين ولا دد لعوب

to remain an idea:

104 لا تغربي مني وظلي فكرة لغدى جميلة

an impossible joy:

105 سمراء ظلي لذة بين اللذائذ مستحيلة

A hint of Jamīl bin Ma'mar's famous Platonic verses* looms in some of his verses:

106 انا حسبي ان اوم الهدب الحلو لاسقي الحياة جرعة كوب

But he arrives at a greater abandon when he invites her never to let pleasures be attained:

107 غيبي معي لا آن لذاتنا يطالنا ولا غد السمّر

---

* واني لارضى من بثينة بالذى لو ابصره الواشي لقرت بلا بله
بلا ،وبألا استطيع ،وبالمنى وبالامل المرجو لو خاب آمله
وبالنظرة المجلى اذا الحول ينقضي اواخره لا تلتقي واوائله

and: 108 واما بلغت التفات الســـــــوى فلا تسكني غير مـاض وآت

Neither torment, nor genuine ecstasy , the love becomes a fountain that flows quietly at will. The object of love, the one persistent face of many complexions (Rindalā, Marikian, Nayanār, Nallāra, Yarindā etc.)[109] is usually without emotions herself. She is a dignified picture made holy by the poet's sustained adoration of her Beauty. There is no adventure in the realms of the soul, no penetration to the mystery of existence,[110] no universal vision of man's vulnerable destiny which lurks behind Beauty, except rarely:

111 ظلـــــي الغدالمنشـود يسبقنـا الممات اليه غيلـــــة

and:

112 فلا تدعـــي الليل يفلت منـــــا ترى هل نعيش الى المشرق ؟

But such verses are rare. The human structure behind his verses is not real. The accent is on glorification, not on fulfilment. It might be a mystical experience (she is the wine of time " سلاف العصـــــور "[113a] and the world is dizzy with her " والكون منها فـي دوار ")[113] but the poet never really arrives at the fire of mystics.

He explained his central theme as a special faith which believes that "man's longing for the beauty of woman represents his deep aspiration for the absolute."[114] She does not represent herself but is a symbol of life and truth. Man's quest for her beauty represents his quest for truth.[115]

Reading his poems thoroughly, one can see more than feel his point. There is, in his persistent love song to his beautiful goddesses a hint of a mystical motif reminiscent of poets like Ibn al-Fārid and Ibn 'Arabi who expressed their most profound mystical feelings through the medium of apparently profane love.[116] But again he misses their infective ecstasy. However, a kind of mystical involvement must be at work, for it is only through such a kind of involvement that the persistence and monotony of his theme and attitude can be explained. For had he been writing about

experience in life, he would have found it virtually impossible to keep to this kind of sustained tone and theme. He had started writing his short poems in 1932; Ajmalu Minki ? Lā! came out in 1960. This means that the poet, over nearly thirty years of life in a quickly changing society, during times of great changes in the poetic medium and concept, had not been able to show any reaction in his poetry to any of these changes. An accusation of inner stagnation is not enough to explain this phenomenon, for even had he persisted in writing ordinary love poetry, his love experience would have surely changed with the change from youth to manhood and to fading middle age. But nothing of this had happened to him. Lovely woman remained an idea of absolute Beauty that needed no true fulfilment, and that did not interfere with the poet's own life. Since he is not a religious mystic, his uniqueness and originality in Arabic poetry must be recognised. So must be recognised, too, his relative unsuitability for our contemporary times, an unsuitability which explains his dwindling popularity and usefulness in the contemporary poetic field.

Between Al-Majdaliyyah and Rindalā 'Aql produced another work of a different nature. This was his play Qadmūs (1944) in which he embodied the other obsessive theme which preoccupied him throughout the years: his Lebanese national concept. This play deals with the Phoenicean legend of Qadmūs, a prince of Sidon, whose sister, Aurope, had run off with Zeus, chief of the Greek gods, and who found it his duty to go after her and fight to bring her back. The myth tells the story of his fight with a dragon who had killed two of his men, and how when he killed it, the god of wisdom ordered him to strew his teeth on the earth, and how those teeth gave birth to armed men who fought on his side.[117] Aurope was the one who gave her name to Europe, and it is said that it was Qadmūs who gave it the alphabet.[118]

The story of Qadmūs, his dramatic fight with the dragon, and the whole circumstance of love, war and vengeance, furnish a good basis for a dramatic

interpretation, but 'Aql, who is by no means a dramatist, only succeeds in filling his play with beautiful lyrical songs.[119] 'Aql's interest in this volume does not lie in the development of a drama of exceptional richness, but in exploiting the theme for the glorification of Lebanese nationalism.[120] However, even this nationalism does not carry enough conviction in the play. For the resurrection of an ancient Lebanese hero who accomplished feats of courage and manhood, when chosen not to celebrate the universal heroism of man and his obstinate endeavour against aggression and evil, but to resurrect a legend of an old civilisation with the view of connecting it with a modern world which had been cut from it for a very long time, does not carry enough weight with the normal reader, because it depends on newly imposed emotions. The educated reader, no matter how enthusiastic he might be about the idea of a "Phoenicean" Lebanon cannot help a vague emotional unease with the ideas of the poem. For he knows only too well that the present culture in Lebanon is not Phoenicean, but is an Arab culture, definitely related to the culture of the Arab-Islamic world, with some Western influences that vary from one community to another. Moreover, the Phoenician discovery is a relatively recent attitude and new attitudes take quite a long time to take emotional roots. The idea of a "lost paradise"[121] rings false for the general Arab reader. This is why Qadmūs loses immediately where the poet wanted it to win. Despite the great beauty of many of its passages, it does not carry the weight of a poetry that had answered the inner need of its readers and probed into the real questions that go on in their minds. The whole Phoenicean theme in modern Arabic poetry, whether explicitly or implicitly employed is an invented theme, brought about as a result of certain political and cultural influences, and imposed on a Lebanese people who had no basic emotional awareness of it at the time.[122]

Why 'Aql chose to write Qadmūs in the form of a play might be explained by what we know of his cultural ambitions, for he might have

wished to accomplish what had not yet been accomplished with real success in Arabic: a poetic drama. However, he had in the theme of "Qadmūs" a fertile material for heroic poetry, with its capacity to celebrate "special conceptions of manhood and honour"[123] where the chief claim of the hero is the pursuit of honour and risk,[124] its glorification of "great national efforts,"[125] its objective and dramatic approach,[126] its themes of violent death, abduction, battles and revenges.[127] However, heroic poetry must seem the last kind of poetry which would attract a Symbolist poet like ʿAql, although Qadmūs is by no means a purely Symbolist play, but infringes on the Romantic and the Classical,[128] with a predominance of lyricism. But heroic motifs are also there, a stark contrast to his quiet lyrical homage to Beauty in his other poetry.

The poet's Symbolism in Qadmūs shows itself occasionally in the poet's intent to use his syntax differently. The use of a non-derived noun as an adjective is also very interesting in the following:

صارختها حقيقة حجر يا ليتهـــا اليأس والحمـام الحبيـــب 129

And he still surprises in his use of words in an original manner:

ضع على الصوت نبرة العســـل الحلو وضع رنة القناة الغضـــوب 130

and:

مطبقـات على المغامر يسحقن ،فعـز يطوى ويندف مطمـــع 131

and arrives sometimes at a concentrated originality in such stanzas:

132

طيـــع مركـــبي
يقهـــر الغلابـــة الامـــواج
ينزع التـــبر ،يسلّ العـــاج
من دم المغـرب

and in such verses:

خط في صبحـك المريض ولو حرفـا وزحزح ثلا مة من غبـــار 133

But he does not have a sustained effort to keep, in this play, to a Symbolic approach, for some stanzas, many of them quite long, are purely

oratorical and packed with loud rhetoric;[134] such as:

135
نحـن غير الغزاة ننزل قفـرا فنخليه انهـرا وجنائـن
نزرع المدن ،نـزرع الفكر فـي الارض ونمضي في الفاتحين مثـالا
وغدا تعرف الحضـارة في صيـدون أما ،فتنحنـي اجـلالا

However, his extreme power of concentration and his deliberate choice of subject saved him from what the Symbolists would certainly call rhetoric disaster. Certain passages in Qadmūs show him to be able to write in the grand style, and some lyrical patches are very beautiful:

136
زينـت خفضة الجناح لنسـر شك في ملعب النجوم جبينـه

and:

137
عن قرى من زمرد عالقـات في جوار الغمام زرق الضيـاء
يتخطين مسرح الشمس يركـزن بلادي على حدود السمـاء

There are numerous patches of high aesthetic value and many others where the poet arrives in his love of country to very impressive expressions sometimes to a generalised altruistic love with Christian affinities:

138
لم نـودع ما بـات في الصدر حبا حيثما الحب كان لبنان كانـا

and:

139
ضقتم بي ورحمـة من بـلادي تسع الارض حيها والجمـادا

and:

140
..... بلادي انا ،ولبنـان عهـد
ليس ارزا ،ولا جبـالا ،ومـاء وطني الحب ،ليس في الحب حقـد
وهو نور فلا يضل ،فكـد ويد تبدع الجمـال ،وعقـل
لا تقل ،"امتي" ،وتسطو بدنيا نحن جار العالمين واهـل

A new freedom in grammatical use of words shows itself in this volume. The definite article " ال " has been used by the poet in several places with the verb both in the past tense:

141
والاذلت ـ يا نبلهـا ،يد طـلاع
.....
والاسلت روح الخلوص من المحسوس
....

and in the imperfect:

142
هو هـذا البيرد هـا من آلـه

What was 'Aql's quest in poetry? Was it uniqueness? Certainly his basic theme is unique. This would agree very well with his own concept of poetic experience, for, writing in the sixties, he insists that the poetic experience or theme must be unique and unlike any other known by other poets, to deserve being written about.[143] This is a strange and deficient approach to poetry and to life, but an approach which he achieved to some extent in his own work. It should help to explain why his poetry, despite its many successful aesthetic elements, remained outside the experience of readers, for in its quest for the uncommon it failed to capture and engage their depths.

He was, at the time, fighting a losing battle with the avant-garde poets of the last decade and he, surreptitiously, adopted some of their concepts, such as the organic unity of a poem,[144] and the relationship of the modern poet with the heritage. On this he said that "Poetry aims at artistic perfection. This is achieved by the poet only if he is able to combine the whole achievement of the heritage, and the poet's own originality",[145] an idea repeated frequently in the fifties having been adopted from T.S. Eliot's ideas in his famous essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent".

He remained loyal to the concept of his early days on the structure of poetry, a concept greatly dependent on that of the French Symbolists, as has been discussed. Again he asserts in the sixties that "a poem is like a palace: either a whole palace, or a wing, or a balcony. The Arab poem was made up of balconies and Arabic poetry is a poetry of verses and not of whole poems; but there are Arabic verses which we will always remember."[146] In the same year he wrote that a poem was constructed by building separate structures, one after the other. Every word in these structures had to be tested, weighed, polished and turned over before it was fitted in the poem so that a poet would achieve a powerful and perfect structure.[147] This is apparently a hard technique. Like Valéry, art

in his practice is order, and like him, he nearly arrives at neo-Classicism in his approach.[148] If the value of the Symbolist poet is measured by his "success in giving life, depth and suggestive power to symbols,"[149] then Sa'īd 'Aql's achievement in this respect is limited. None of his symbols have gained memorable significance, for most of them were voluntary and intellectual. The greatest Symbolists are those who can "create symbols spontaneously and intuitively and recapture the freshness and mytho-poetic power of primitive bards."[150] It is certain that 'Aql was not spontaneous but lacked in the natural easy reaction of poets who lay themselves open to experience. His vision of absolute Beauty remained vague and uninfective, for it lacked, especially in his short poems, the depth of feeling and the depth of thought as well as the right kind of sensibility which make suggestive poetry great.[151] His striving to conjure up a steadfast calmness, the absence of anguish, of real conflict, in his poetry, his lack of concern in the tragic and pathetic in life and in what is decisive and destiny-making, makes his poetry a kind of song that belongs to no time, to no place and to no particular identity. The human structure behind it is not real, especially in his shorter poems where some clue to the identity of the poet and his women is expected most. But his women as has been said, were only the embodiment of an ideal, and in such an ideal the poet puts nothing of himself. Inaccessible and hence exalted, the beloved ones, who are always exquisite but never intelligent or wise, are more of puerile goddesses than women of flesh and blood. Thus his poetry added really very little to the riches of love poetry in Arabic.

What is most disturbing about his poetry is that it did not draw strength from the experience he gained in life. His poems are hardly events aware of the world, let alone immersed in it. Reading him now, one is drawn into admiration but is hardly fired by passion for his work. His passionate reaching for calm, a fanatical insistence on order, is a great contrast to the turbulent atmosphere from which Arabic poetry takes

its mood at the present time. His greatest achievement lies in his success in borrowing into Arabic poetry some of the techniques of French nineteenth century Symbolism which are more sophisticated and subtle than Arabic poetry had ever known. I. Ḥāwi speaks lightly of this achievement[152] in his long article in which he found little merit in 'Aql's poetry. But Ḥāwi's judgement is too severe and overlooks 'Aql's position in the thirties and forties, and the great pioneering role he played. The fact that other poets like Adīb Maẓhar had attempted some Symbolic poetry cannot rob 'Aql of this pioneering role, for Maẓhar's experiment was both too limited and too unknown in the Arab world. It is not a matter of 'giving a patent' to any one who attempts a new trend first, even though, as in the case of Maẓhar, his attempt was artistically successful. The merit goes to the person who establishes his trend through a sustained and pioneering effort. Again, Ḥāwi seems to think little of the fact that 'Aql borrowed his ideas on poetry as well as his style from French poetry. However, here he forgets two points. The first is that modern Arabic poetry, even up till this time, can hardly boast of creating new concepts and modern styles which are not directly influenced by Western poetry. The second point which Ḥāwi overlooks is that 'Aql's role was great in recreating this sophisticated style in Arabic, a language which was not yet made flexible enough by very long experimentation. The introduction of a poetic style into a new language, and the exploration of a new diction is a great achievement.

Looked at in perspective, one can see his period (end of thirties and most of the forties) as one of a fantastic truce from the sorrows and troubles of the two periods which flanked his own: the first dominated by a Romantic search for an undiscovered identity, and the second dominated by a realistic search for a lost and bedraggled one; the first torn by despair, lament, escapism and fleeting dreams, many of them morbid and depressing, and the second haunted by violent visions of rejection,

rebellion, terror and wounded pride. His poetic pre-occupation in this intermediate period seems miraculously unrealistic, for he virtually lived in an ivory tower and was, to use Karam's words, "cutting shining diamonds, and polishing the jewels of distilled words".[153]

What made his experiment possible made possible also a few others like his, some probably in imitation of his own (Badī' Ḥaqqi of Syria), some definitely independent of him (Bishr Fāris of Egypt). Ḥaqqi published his collection, Sihr, in 1953. It was apparent that his 'well chiselled' poetry carried the influence of both 'Aql and Syrian Classicism. It had a short season in Damascus but was quickly overshadowed by major poetic events. Had it appeared in the previous period, it would have perhaps had a greater prominence. For the forties were marked by a relative calm. Intellectuals were able to exploit at leisure the fruits of Western culture, now a few generations old and fermenting rapidly. A new value was given in this period to the poetic structure, to the choice of poetic diction, to the distillation of the poetic whole, and a new insistence on hard work in poetry and on the precise use of words was born. A check on dilution and sentimentality, a rejection of puny emotions was effected with success. This proved a most necessary operation just before the fifties.

It is true that many minor poets imitated 'Aql's poetry, especially his diction, and vulgarised his experiment. But their failure should not reflect on it. 'Aql's influence should be traced, not among those direct imitators, but among the major poets of the fifties. His experiment proved to have been not an end, but a beginning of an important Symbolic trend in contemporary Arabic poetry, not "an abortive literary movement", to use Henri Peyre's words, writing on the French experiment,"but one of the most fertile".[154] For the poetry of the fifties showed itself to be decidedly Symbolic. This situation is comparable with that of the European Symbolic heritage in modern times, to an extent. The original

Symbolist movement in France gave way to a wider concept of poetry in which a Symbolic approach was used in "a fresh exploration of the human situation by modern poets like Yeats, T.S.Eliot and W.H. Auden, and a new attempt to make order out of the chaos that is still with us."[155] The age, which was liberal enough to allow the existence of a poetic concept which regarded art as a "private mystical experience," had changed into an age which insisted on poetry to be in the service of man's more communal problems of existence.[156]

Similarly, the Arab poets of the fifties, who were facing the most crucial problems of Arab existence after the Palestine disaster of 1948, could no longer tolerate the existence of such a concept of poetry as that of Sa'īd 'Aql's. But his experiment gave later poets an excellent basis to build on. The suggestion might validly arise that these poets of the fifties who adopted varying Symbolic attributes in a more externalised poetry were building on their knowledge of twentieth century Western poets who wrote in the Symbolic tradition. Although no critic can deny the fact that contemporary Arab poets are closely in touch with contemporary Western literature, in varying degrees, there can be no doubt that most of them exploited 'Aql's Symbolist experiment to the full. It is very difficult to assess his influence in concrete details, because such influences are subtle and often influenced poets who were antagonistic to his methods (such as Yūsuf al-Khāl).[157] But all these poets grew in the budding tradition which he founded. The poetic tools in Arabic had already been manoeuvred by 'Aql and his colleagues for the specific use of symbols within a modern context and any poets who came after them could not help but benefit from their successful experiment.

(iv) The Attempt of Bishr Fāris in Egypt

An emphasis on feeling and intuition was given by Bishr Fāris (1907?-1963) in his definition of the creative function. He was writing in 1938, at a time when Romanticism in Egypt had arrived at the highest peak of its less healthy streaks: dilution, verbosity, and too much insistence on emotional exhibitionism. It had become, moreover, a melancholic expression of a generation of poets reared under similar social, emotional, cultural and political conditions. In a very short time, 'Ali Mahmūd Ṭāhā's joyous lyricism was to dominate the poetic scene, but in 1938 the general atmosphere seemed gloomy and the poetic situation was getting desperately out of hand.

It does seem a loss for poetry in Egypt that Bishr Fāris's special qualities were not capable of being exploited in a verse strong enough and abundant enough as to dominate the poetic scene. His was a scarce and slow experiment in an elitist kind of poetry, written at intervals, and never meant for the general public. Fāris is the most aristocratic of modern Arab poets, if the term can still convey what is meant here: a man who was not preoccupied with achieving quick and laudatory victories with a large reading public. But this commendable quality was not free, perhaps, of an inner thrill in the heart of this poet to surprise his contemporaries with a novel invention.

Bishr Fāris was a man well versed in Western literature. He did his post-graduate studies at the Sorbonne where he got his Ph.D. in 1932.[158] He started his career in 1936 by writing articles in French for the Encyclopaedia of Islam,[159] and throughout his life he did, beside other things, research in Islamic art, writing both in French and Arabic. His scholarly and original work was published by the French Institute for Oriental Antiquities in both Damascus and Cairo.[160]

A scholar, he was a poet, a dramatist and a story writer.[161] His

literary works were highly Symbolical and like Sa'īd 'Aql, he based his Symbolist theory on nineteenth century French Symbolism. In Egypt he was an isolated figure, unique in his way of life,[162] in his interests, in the kind of literature he wrote. Of a Lebanese origin, his presence in Egypt did not seem to blend with the general literary atmosphere in that country. This does seem strange, because he was born in Egypt[163] and lived there most of his life.

Aside from his great and active interest in Islamic art, Fāris was greatly interested in the Arabic language and had a firm grasp on it.[164] This is why he was able to apply his theory of Symbolism in his writings, because Symbolism demands a deep and firm knowledge of the language in which the author writes. Like other Symbolists, Symbolism to Fāris is the discovery of the subconscious, the exposition of the hidden feelings and impulses, and the record of the sparks and spontaneous creations achieved through the neglect, on the part of the author, of the actual world.[165] To him literature abhors the description of logical outer things,[166] for what makes literature is the capacity to record our own reactions to things. Literature is therefore a record of the inner self achieved by the artist because his eyes are well trained to see inner visions. The emphasis on feeling is prominent in his writings and Fāris insists that the artist hardly cares for logic, which is a rational process employing the mind as a tool. He differentiates, rather sharply, between the process of drawing conclusions from several facts, which is a rational process, and the artistic realisation of things "tahqīq" which cannot be achieved except through feeling and intuition.[167] For truth to the artist is not that which he arrives at by a rational process, but that which he feels by his intuition.[168]

But to him, familiar language is connected with the mental exercise of the mind and is therefore foreign to the substance of the subconscious,

and completely inadequate to express its spontaneous creations. The only way to do that is by abandoning the oratorical style. The act of creativity, moreover, depends on both the intelligence which perfects the created piece of work, and feeling which, even before the work of creation has begun, had already aspired to unlimited perfection which is difficult to realise through the ordinary familiar language.[169] But by the above mentioned process in which both the intelligence, "al-hidhq" as he calls it, and the feeling have co-operated, a finer artistic creation is achieved characterised by conciseness and an abhorrence of inflation and verbosity. The deeper the ideas are, the more difficult and ambiguous the style will be, so that there is a gentle shade over the words, which must never be stereotyped and parts of stock expressions.

Bishr Fāris's poetry is very distilled,[170] and his choice of words is deliberate and original. Unfortunately, his basic poetic gift was not great enough to impose a spark of creative genius on his poetry. His two Symbolic prose plays, Mafraq al-Tarīq (1938) and Jabhat al-Ghaib (1960),[171] yield far more to his particular creative talent than does his poetry. Despite his thorough knowledge of the Arabic language and his love of it, he did not succeed in imposing a new poetic diction on his generation of poets or on the generation that came after him. Whereas Sa'īd 'Aql's experiment grew in the bones of the following generation, as it were, and flowered into a thousand creative sparks at the hands of greater and more dynamic poets who surpassed him in depth and contemporaneousness with world poetry, the experiment of Bishr Fāris seems now, in retrospect, to have been a rather isolated experiment like the poet himself, an event not destined perhaps to help the development of the poetic art as much as to test the readiness and capacity of the poetic period to assimilate diverse poetic experiences.

Fāris never published his poems in book form. They are still to be sought in the periodicals of the time or in books that deal with Symbolism.

His greatest fame as an experimentor in poetry was achieved in the forties, when he was more active and when the poetic atmosphere was eager for change and experimentation, and welcomed all attempts at novelty.

But despite the fame he achieved in the forties, his generation of readers found his poetic creations extremely difficult to understand. Unabashed, they tried in one instance to discover what Fāris meant when he said:

لو كنت ناصحة الجبين ... هيهات تنفضني الزيارة
ما روعة اللفظ المبين ... السحر من وحي العبارة
ظل على وضح الجبين ... رسمته معجزة الاشارة
خط تساقط كالحزين ... أرخى على العزم انكسارة
ماذا يؤجد المحصنين ... صوت شج خلف الستارة
غيبت في العجب الدفين ... معنى براعته البكارة
درا يفوت الناظمين ... ونهضت تهديني بحاره
خطوات وسواس رزين ... وهب تعميه الطهارة

172

He was here talking to his muse, but this meaning never occurred to his readers. This visitor must perforce have been a woman, they said.[173] The clear indication in the following verse:

ما روعة اللفظ المبين ... السحر من وحي العبارة

that he was talking about the poetic language and inspiration and in the following verse, about the shade that hovers over a poem and about words that imply rather than explain, completely eluded them. These were, strangely, the same readers who were reading Sa'īd 'Aql when at the height of his popularity. It does seem ironical that Fāris's insistence on the artistic experience to be realised through the feeling could not be applied to his own poetry, for the readers who were enjoying much of 'Aql's poetry primarily through the feelings evoked in them, were not able to be influenced in the same way by Fāris's poems.

Bishr Fāris then remains one of the figures who furnished variety and a sudden truce from the loud poetic ejaculations of the Egyptian Romantics. A succinct writer, his compendious creations stood in direct contrast to the scores of redundant poems that were being written at the

time. But, contrary to what he aspired, he could not capture in his poetry a complete harmony between emotion and meaning, or infuse his poetry with a vividness or a subtlety vibrant enough as to evoke real emotion in his reader, and his poems remained rather uninfluential and uninspiring.

(v) A Surrealist Experiment

An attitude of aesthetic courage and adventure was in the atmosphere of the forties. The experiments in poetry during the previous decades, especially the thirties, gave a greater scope for adventure and further experimentation. At the time everything seemed possible. Although the reactionary forces had never been tolerant nor indifferent, they were not, as yet, menacingly aggressive. This may have been due to several reasons. Firstly, that the more drastic experiments in poetry up to this time (those of blank verse and free verse of Abū Shādi's type, i.e. the mixture of several metres in one poem) had not been successful and did not seem a threat to formal poetry. 'Aql's Symbolist experiment had been accomplished in an atmosphere of Classical strength, and was therefore, not easily to be condemned by traditionalists. That of Bishr Fāris were not really taken seriously by readers but was rather treated as an amusing and ineffectual experiment. Secondly, there was an already deep rooted reverence for Western literary adventures, brought about by critics and men of letters who had had some access to some kind of Western education, and readers seemed not only genuinely curious but also reverential about the literary achievements of the West. Thirdly, the intellectual confrontation with the West and the gradual rejection of its ideals by some leading authors and political leaders had not yet attained significance; for it was in the fifties that anti-Western antagonism in some circles in the Arab world took place, in whose wake highly Westernised literary movements and concepts were treated at least with caution if not with suspicion.

In 1947 Orkhān Muyassar (1911?-1965), a highly cultured experimentalist from Aleppo, in conjunction with another poet, Dr. 'Ali al-Nāṣir, published a volume of prose poetry entitled Siryāl, forwarded by an introduction by Muyassar who also wrote a critical passage at the end. 'Ali al-Nāṣir, who is regarded by S. Kayyālı as a poet living in an ivory tower,[174] had published several volumes of poetry before this one,[175] but the twenty-five pages of prose poetry he published in this volume were completely different. He had got rid of the metre, the rhyme and the traditional clarity which characterised his former poetry.[176] Muyassar's share in the prose poetry published in this volume was eighteen pages. The poetry pieces of the two poets were of a Surrealistic nature. It is apparent from the explanatory passage which Muyassar wrote that al-Nāṣir had undergone a great change in his technique,[177] and one can guess that this might have been achieved under Muyassar's influence. This is confirmed by the fact that Muyassar succeeded, during the years, in acquiring a reputation of note in Syria as a delittante and an avant-garde influence on young Syrian and other Arab talents. His house in Damascus remained, until shortly before his death, a mecca for writers and poets living in or passing by Damascus. He was a lover and connoisseur of fine art and fine literature and exerted a guiding influence both through his writings (published mainly in periodicals) and through personal contact.

Siryāl might be the most avant-garde poetic experiment in modern Arabic poetry before the movement of free verse at the end of the forties. In its introduction the doctrine of Surrealism was introduced to the Arab reader with force, and was discussed and elaborated not by a mind which saw Western experiments as infallible paragons of perfection, but by an independent mind that tried to use its own criteria of value and its own critical approach. However, much of Muyassar's explanation of Surrealism is an interpretation of Western Surrealist concept as its greatest propagators saw it. The role of logic and direction in the work of art

is condemned,[178] for logic should not interfere in the constant fruitful interchange between our outer clashes and our bare souls.[179] If such interference does not take place, the artist then can record what creative images come to his mind, regardless of their beauty or ugliness, or the fact that they conform to or clash with accepted social standards.[180] The role of the subconscious, which had already been introduced by Sa'īd 'Aql's successful Symbolist experiment, was again introduced with even greater emphasis. Like the Western Surrealists, Muyassar called for the liberation of the subconscious,[181] and like them he wanted to avoid "superimposing a complex structure of didactic reasoning and of refined analysis in an attempt to capture these mysterious moments when man, escaping the inexplorable flow of time, reaches the 'peak of sovereignty'".[182] Muyassar described the subconscious as a "large 'reservoir'"[183] collecting the reactions of our clashes with the physical surroundings.[184] If the artist, when in a state of creativity, has a means of releasing these reactions and of thus liberating the subconscious at the moment of gemination with the conscious, then he could achieve a true Surrealistic type of creation.[185] He asserted, however, that when the artist is finally able to record these images liberated from the subconscious he usually does so only by resorting to "definite geometric expressions (words, figures, colours)" which his observation was able to store in the memory and which he employs to delineate the living impression of the image he clearly sees within himself. The image then emerges as a mixture of Surrealism and Symbolism because in it, the workings of the conscious mind are clear, due to the fact that the artist resorts to the traditional vocabulary in explaining [his ideas] and in [creating] his comparisons."[186] In his opinion, his work subsequently suffers from verbosity.[187] The poetry of André Breton and his group, for him, is nothing more than direct mental compositions expressed in extreme Symbolism.[188] At its best, it is never Surrealistic, but "para-Surrealistic".[189] Was Muyassar advocating that

kind of extreme Surrealism condemned by so many Western critics as second rate? Henri Peyre described this kind as "automatic writing, uncontrolled by reason or by critical spirit, which gave itself out as spoken and written thought seized in its spontaneous immediacy."[190] Apparently he did. But Peyre does not seem to see in this kind of Surrealist expression any great advantage, and he hastens to deny that Breton and other leading Surrealists ever resorted to this method for "their verse and their prose give evidence of elaborate compositions of skilful combination of effects, of a restrained choice made among the riches of the unconscious."[191] This is of interest here because it shows that the first protagonists of Surrealism in modern Arabic poetry were advocating extreme methods right from the beginning. Perhaps the following examples show the extent of their adventure.

Muyassar writes:

192

تمثال رائـــع | حدبـــاء
يحمل رأسا كلها عـين | في فقرتها العابسـة
دخان .. بريق يعمي البصر .. ضوضاء | عين من زجـــاج
| الام :
.... | مأتم صامـت
سديم يسبح في صمـت | ....
....

and ʿAli al-Nāṣir writes:

193

واحد ايار | دموع مغلقة | جنـة
دهـر | غلة تنقع | ..
ضجـر | عشرة جد وحشية | دموع مجلجلـة
جماد ناطق | سعير .. | دموع معترقـة
جليـد | .... | ...
غفوة سمحاء | عيـون | جهنم .. جنة ..
... | جداول | عين ذات كوثر

Muyassar must have predicted that Arab literary taste would not accept such extreme writing, for he attacked "the illiteracy of literary taste"[194] of readers "whose minds are accustomed to traditional clarity

and quick logical connections."[195] Surrealism to them, he said, was nothing but a combination of words and phrases without any connection. They did not realise the capacity of these words and phrases to arouse a special emotional atmosphere.[196]

One of the most important attributes of Surrealism which Orkhān Muyassar discussed in his explanatory passage at the end was 'condensation'. In the forties, Arabic poetry was already suffering from extreme dilution and verbosity, as a decadent streak of sentimental Romanticism. Muyassar added another important reinforcement to the Symbolist attempts towards condensation and conciseness.[197] He ended his rather lengthy discussion of this attribute with this sentence: "An eye brimming with tears is far less beautiful than an eye whose tears have burned away."[198]

It is very difficult to evaluate the influence of a book like Siryāl on contemporary Arabic poetry. If Muyassar had influenced ʿAli al-Nāṣir directly, he certainly did not influence another great friend of his, ʿUmar Abū Rīshah.[199] However, there is no doubt that Syrian poets of the fifties were showing early signs of sophistication and complexity that could never have been accepted by the Syrian conservatives. Young talents like Adūnīs (ʿAli Aḥmad Saʿīd) who is Syria's foremost poet at the present time, did come under the exciting influence of Orkhān Muyassar.[200] However, there were many other influences playing on these poets, and it is not possible to ascertain where one influence ends and the other begins.

Footnotes

1. Karam, "Madkhal", p.266.
2. Ibid., p. 67.
3. Ibid.
4. Lubnān al-Shā'ir, pp.183-91.
5. "Wathbat al-Shi'r al-Lubnāni", Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, pp.69-70.
6. Karam, Al-Ramziyyah, p.148.
7. See his book of collected essays, Ka'sun li Khamr, Beirut, 1961, in which the introductions he wrote to other poets' works are published.
8. Published in Al-Makshūf periodical, No.121, 1937, et seq.
9. Henri Peyre, "A French Debate on Poetry", The University of California Chronicle, July, 1928, p.326. It is interesting to see here how Arab poets were already becoming more contemporaneous, for only a few years had passed since this lecture was made public in France, appearing in a separate booklet in 1925 and in book form including a debate on poetry in 1926.
10. See Karam, Al-Ramziyyah, 149-156, for comparisons with individual French theoriticians.
11. See the introduction to Al-Majdaliyyah, second edition, Beirut, 1960, pp.14-24.
12. Ibid., p.26.
13. Ibid., pp.18, 22, 38.
14. Ibid., p.22.
15. Ibid., p.39.
16. Ibid., pp.24-25.
17. See Paul Valéry, Variété, tenth edition, Paris, 1924, No.I, 67, where he says: "Les dieux, gracieusment, nous donnent pour rien tel premier vers; mais c'est à nous de façonner le second, qui doit consonner avec l'autre, et ne pas être indigne de son aîné surnaturel. Ce n'est pas trop de toutes les resources de l'expérience et de l'esprit pour le rendre comparable au vers qui fut un don."
18. Al-Majdaliyyah, p.27.
19. See Henri Peyre, "A French Debate on Poetry", pp.328-9 for a summary of Bremond's and Valéry's ideas on the subject.
20. Al-Majdaliyyah, p.30.
21. Ibid., p.31.
22. Ibid., pp.31-32.
23. Ibid., p.32.
24. Al-Ramziyyah, p.157.
25. Karam, "Madkhal", p.273.
26. Bowra, The Heritage of Symbolism, p.6.
27. Ibid., p.7.
28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p.8.
30. Ibid., p.10.
31. I. Ḫāwi, "Sa'īd 'Aql mā lahū wa mā 'Alaihi", Al-Ādāb, June 1961, p.32.
32. Op.cit., p.8.
33. See also I. Ḫāwi, op.cit., p.41.
34. Op.cit., p.9.
35. Ibid.
36. Al-Ramziyyah, pp.157-171.
37. "Madkhal", p.273.
38. Karam, Al-Ramziyyah, p.173.
39. Ibid.
40. Op.cit., p.43.
41. In an essay entitled "The Aesthetic Dignity of the 'Fleur du mal'", Baudelaire, ed. by H. Peyre, pp.162-3.
42. Al-Majdaliyyah, pp.76-7.
43. See Qadmūs, second edition, Beirut, 1947, p.83.
44. Al-Ramziyyah, p.112.
45. Ibid., p.113.
46. Dīwān Ibn al-Fārid, pp.61-2.
47. Ibid., pp.91-2.
48. Pp.332-62.
49. Ibid., p.345.
50. Ibid., pp.239-41.
51. Al-Majdaliyyah, p.32.
52. Ibid., p.59.
53. Ibid., p.43.
54. For more examples of his use of 'white' see ibid., pp.49, 54, 62, etc.
55. For examples from the Classical poetry see D. al-Jundi, Al-Ramziyyah fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi, pp.246-7.
56. Al-Majdaliyyah, p.46.
57. Ibid., p.56.
58. Ibid., p.54.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., p.57.
61. Ibid., p.60.
62. Ibid., p.76.
63. Ibid., p.80.
64. Ibid., p.87.
65. Ibid., p.71.
66. Ibid., p.63.

67. Al-Majdaliyyah, p.52.
68. Ibid., p.54.
69. Foakes, The Romantic Assertion, p.21. For more on paradox see also pp.19-21.
70. Op.cit., p.30.
71. Al-Majdaliyyah, pp.57-58.
72. Ibid., p.62.
73. Ibid., p.59.
74. Ibid., p.64.
75. Ibid., p.74.
76. Al-Ramziyyah, p.157.
77. Al-Majdaliyyah, p.74.
78. Ibid., pp.80-81.
79. Karam in "Madkhal," p.270, refers to two literary styles in Al-Majdaliyyah, a Romantic and a Symbolist, which point to his two different phases. However, there is very little Romantic affinities in 'Aql's poetry which is usually characterised by Classical reserve.
80. Al-Majdaliyyah, p.57.
81. Ibid., p.49.
82. Ibid., p.71.
83. Ibid., p.44.
84. Ibid., p.72.
85. Ibid., p.70.
86. Ibid., p.71.
87. Ibid., p.58.
88. Ibid., p.44.
89. See also Rindalā, first edition, Beirut, 1950: " النسر بن والفل ", p.9; " شفّ عن لؤلؤ ", ibid., p.61; see also Qadmūs, " الغلّ والآس والسوسن ", p.27; " صبا ", ibid.; " خبزلى ", ibid., p.28; " عاطل القفر حال ", ibid., p.30; " كل يوم محجل ", ibid., p.52; see also 'Abbūd, Dimaqs, pp.44 & 45 for a criticism of his occasional use of antiquated words, above example in Qadmūs, p.87.
90. Ibid., p.26; " الشبعان من ثدى امه ", ibid., p.35; " خدّا منا ", Rindalā, p.88; " جيت " for " جئت ", ibid., p.87; see also his frequent use of the colloquial such as " شال ", ibid., pp.13, 98, etc. 'Abbūd encouraged his use of such words, see Dimaqs, p.46).
91. Al-Majdaliyyah, p.56.
92. Ibid., p.57.
93. Ibid., p.72.

94. Al-Majdaliyyah, p.56; see also Rindalā, " د ل ", pp.9, 26 etc. (see also 'Abbūd's frequent rejection of 'Aql's use of the word , Dimaqs, pp.40, 42, 47); " دلدال ثوبـــك " ibid., p.144; " جايلته رندلـــــى "، ibid., p.85; see also Qadmūs, " الدهاريـــر "، p.109; " عندلتهـــــا "، ibid., p.68 etc.

95. See Rindalā, p.148.

96. However, some of his poems have been published in Al-Makshūf periodical between 1936 and 1941.

97. Dimaqs, p.56 in which he says that 'Aql rendered only a lip service to love.

98. Lubnān al-Shā'ir, pp.190-1; Karam, Al-Ramziyyah, p.173 agrees that the flow of emotion dies in his poetry.

99. See for example his poems "Samrā' Dimashq" and "Nār", in Rindalā pp.136-8 and 143-6 respectively.

100. Ibid., p.25.

101. Ibid., p.28.

102. Ibid., p.30.

103. Ibid., p.26.

104. Ibid., p.120.

105. Ibid., p.122.

106. Ibid., p.26.

107. Ibid., p.124.

108. Ibid., p.132.

109. The last two names are in Ajmalu Minki ? La!, Beirut, 1960. See also 'Abbūd, Dimaqs, p.40.

110. See I. Ḥāwi, op.cit., pp.41 & 42-43.

111. Rindalā, p.122.

112. Ibid., p.143.

113a. Ibid., p.31.

113. Ibid., p.42.

114. See I. Ḥāwi, op.cit., p.44.

115. Ibid.

116. See D. al-Jundi, op.cit., pp.352-6; see also R.A. Nicholson, The Mystics of Islam, London, 1914, pp.102-6.

117. See Qadmūs, p.23.

118. Ibid.

119. See also Karam, Al-Ramziyyah, p.172.

120. On Sa'īd 'Aql's glorification of Lebanon, see Karam, Madkhal, pp.271-2. Labaki, op.cit., p.205; 'Abbūd, Dimaqs, pp.54 & 55, etc.

121. Phrase by 'Abbūd, Dimaqs, p.55. However, 'Aql does not lack recent writers whose ideal in a Phoenicean Lebanon as an immortal seat of civilisation, takes after his. See for a single example George Ghurayyib, Sa'īd 'Aql wal-Ghazal al-Khallāq, Beirut, 1963; especially pp.97-99.

122. In his second edition to Qadmūs, ʿAql writes in the preface (p.9) that about ten years had passed since "the idea flowed into the veins of contemporary thought". This is the idea of a Lebanon that has always been the seat of a separate civilisation, for to him "the Lebanese have a role to play in the destiny of man." (p.10). He declares, ibid., that Qadmūs in its second edition "was meant to be the herald of the new dawn." This shows how recent these ideas are in Lebanon.

123. C.M. Bowra, Heroic Poetry, London, 1961, p.4.

124. Ibid., p.5.

125. Ibid., p.30.

126. Ibid.

127. Ibid., p.15.

128. Karam, Al-Ramziyyah, p.171.

129. Qadmūs, p.42.

130. Ibid., p.43.

131. Ibid., p.49.

132. Ibid., p.55.

133. Ibid., p.121.

134. Ibid., especially pp.45-52 & p.54.

135. Ibid., p.47.

136. Ibid., p.72.

137. Ibid., pp.26-27.

138. Ibid., p.83.

139. Ibid., p.86.

140. Ibid., p.87. See also pp.45, 47 et. passim.

141. Ibid., p.31.

142. Ibid., p.62; more examples are found in Ajmalu Minki ? Lā!, see pp.94, 95, 110, 114 and other places.

143. Al-Anwār daily, Beirut, April 24th, 1960, p.6.

144. Ibid.

145. Ibid.

146. Ibid.

147. Ibid., May 22nd, 1960, p.6. Karam, however, had described this same technique many years earlier. See Al-Ramziyyah, p.173.

148. On Valéry, see Norman Suckling, Paul Valéry and the Civilized Mind, Oxford University Press, 1954, p.26.

149. Henri Peyre, "Symbolism," p.293.

150. Ibid.

151. See H. Peyre, "A French Debate on Poetry," p.335.

152. Op.cit., pp.28-29.

153. "Madkhal," p.275.

154. "Symbolism," p.292.

155. Foakes, op.cit., p.179; see also Wilson, Axel's Castle, pp.23-25.

156. See Bowra, The Heritage of Symbolism, p.15.

157. See the attack of Yūsuf al-Khāl on ʿAql's poetry in Shiʿr magazine, No.1, Spring, 1957, pp.97-8. Al-Khāl, however is a direct descendent of ʿAql's spirit of a glorious Lebanon and has benefited greatly from his poetic technique.

158. Luwīs ʿAwaḍ, "Bishr Fāris", Dirāsāt fi 'l-Naqd wa 'l-Adab, pp.202-3.

159. Ibid., p.203.

160. See ibid., pp.203-4.

161. Fāris has one collection of short stories, Sū' Tafāhum which was published in 1942; his two plays will be mentioned presently.

162. See a description of his style of life in ʿAwaḍ, op.cit., pp.206-9; see also A.G. Karam, "Bishr Fāris fī Fannihi 'l-Masraḥi, Shāʿirun ʿĀliqun mā baina 'l-Arḍi wa 'l-Samā'", Shiʿr quarterly, No.26, Spring, 1963, p.100.

163. See ʿAwaḍ, op.cit., p.207.

164. See ibid., p.208; Karam, "Bishr Fāris fī Fannihi 'l-Masraḥi", pp.101-2.

165. From his introduction to his first play Mafraq al-Ṭarīq, Cairo, 1938, p.5.

166. Ibid., p.7.

167. Ibid.

168. Ibid.

169. Ibid., p.9.

170. On his poetic language see Karam, Al-Ramziyyah, p.130; Awad, Dirāsāt fi 'l-Naqd wa 'l-Adab, pp.209-10.

171. For a discussion of his two plays see Karam, "Bishr Fāris fī Fannihi 'l-Masraḥi", pp.101-9.

172. As quoted by Karam, Al-Ramziyyah, p.128; for an analysis of this poem see ibid., pp.129-30.

173. See Al-Adīb magazine, August, 1944, pp.56, 57 & 58 for comments on this poem.

174. Al Harakah al-Adabiyyah fī Ḥalab, p.222.

175. Namely Qiṣṣat Qalb, Al-Ẓama', Al-Balad al-Mashūrah and Al-Aghwār.

176. See the comparisons which Muyassar makes between his former poetry and that published in this volume, Siryāl, Aleppo, 1947, pp.73 & 75-6.

177. Ibid., pp.72-7.

178. Ibid., p.11.

179. Ibid.

180. Ibid.

181. See Henri Peyre, "The Significance of Surrealism", an offprint from the Yale French Studies, Fall-Winter, 1948, Vol.I, ii, 3.

182. Ibid., p.9.

183. Siryāl, p.13.

184. Ibid.

185. Ibid., pp.13-4.

186. Ibid., pp.14-15.

187. Ibid., p.15.

188. Ibid., pp.17-18.

189. Ibid., p.15.

190. Peyre, loc.cit.

191. Ibid.

192. Siryāl, pp.62-3.

193. Ibid., pp.44-5.

194. Ibid., p.69.

195. Ibid., p.70.

196. Ibid. See also the attack of S. Kayyāli, op.cit., pp.228 and 229 on this poetry where he calls it sterile, p.229.

197. Siryāl, pp.70-77.

198. Ibid., p.77.

199. Muyassar often spoke to the present writer of his close friendship with Abū Rīshah.

200. As told to the present writer by both Muyassar and Adūnīs.

CHAPTER SIX: THE CRITICAL INFLUENCE OF 'ABBŪD AND MANDŪR

(i) Marūn 'Abbūd

The steady development of modern Arabic poetry, as has been illustrated throughout this work, was enhanced, encouraged, anticipated and sometimes checked by the energy of Arab critics. Many of these critics were also poets themselves. The critical contribution, until the end of the forties, however, set ideals which the poetry of the time was unable to attain. Only three poet-critics, Nu'aimah, Abū Shabakah and 'Aql wrote a poetry almost as good as their concept of what poetry should be. This has been illustrated above.

One critic , however, made it his life's work to act as patron-saint to the Arab creative talent wherever it was to be found. This was the Lebanese, Marūn 'Abbūd, (1886-1962) to whose works many references have already been made. My discussion of the poetry of the two or three generations of Arab poets who wrote in this century would be deficient without reference to 'Abbūd's work. 'Abbūd died in 1962 at quite an advanced age, having given a most decisive service to the development of modern Arabic poetry. A man of great originality, courage, integrity and charm, he was the greatest iconoclast modern Arab criticism has known. As a "patron saint" to the Arab creative talent, he attempted not only to guide and encourage it but also to protect it against its own faults and weaknesses as well as against imposters in the field. He was an authentic guardian of the literary citadel and tried to clear away the jungle of the sham and the traditional. He surpassed such iconoclasts as al'Aqqād, because, despite his strict judgments and his irony, he did not show the unreasonable harshness, the bitterness and the self-glorification which spoiled al-'Aqqād's work. His judgment, moreover, was fairer and, artistically, more correct. He surpassed such iconoclasts as Nu'aimah, because he remained a dedicated critic and never abandoned his central

place as the wise and lively arbiter of current literary contribution for any other activity. He surpassed such critics as Mandūr because he insisted on remaining at the heart of the literary life of the whole Arab world. Mandūr, as will be seen presently, became more locally minded with the years.

In spirit, ʿAbbūd was at the same time a Lebanese and an Arab. Although well versed in the direct history and folklore of his own country, his knowledge of formal literature was pan-Arabic. He spent all his life as a teacher of Classical Arabic literature in al-Jāmiʿah al-Waṭaniyyah in ʿĀley,[1] a secondary school whose pan-Arab fame was enhanced by his own prestige. He himself had been a student for two years in the famous al-Ḥikmah School.[2] His own culture was versatile and deeply rooted. He united in himself a masterful knowledge of the Quran and the Bible, and a thorough acquaintance with Classical Arabic literature, a great interest in Arab philosophy and history, and some fair knowledge of French literature.[3] As a critic, he showed the most flexible critical sensibility imaginable in the Arab world at that time. If one remembers that ʿAbbūd was contemporaneous with all the movements and changes happening to Arabic poetry during the first six decades of this century, one is better able to appreciate the meaning of his flexible critical sensibility. For, as has been said, the Arab creative talent compressed the experience of centuries in the West into a few decades. ʿAbbūd witnessed all of this, and examined it with unfailing passion and open-mindedness. In a letter to a friend after a long illness in 1955 he says: "If I told you that since coming of age I did not spend a day without writing something, you might not believe me ... But I have made myself ... If anything [in me] pleases you, it is because I have developed with the time and did not lag behind, even for one single hour. I promise the young generation to stay like this."[4] ʿAbbūd was a persistently avant-garde critic and was never baffled by the

successive waves of experimentation.[5] He would have never been satisfied, as Nu'aimah was, with the position of an isolated sage who wrote only desultory comments on a poet's work when given to him for judgment. 'Abbūd rode the crest of the wave.

'Abbūd attempted other creative work, such as poetry and story writing, but it was as a literary and social critic that he achieved his particular fame,[6] and it was precisely in the field of literary criticism that he exerted his greatest influence. His critical writings are mostly on applied criticism, a great contrast to many other critical experiments which leaned more on transmitting critical theories taken mostly from Western sources. 'Abbūd therefore did not develop a major critical theory which can be quoted or sought for systematic information. But the basic core of his critical attitude and one which proved most instrumental in the development of modern poetry, was his absolute abhorrence of conventionalism, repetitiveness (he called it rumination),[7] and imitation of past works or of Arabic Classics,[8] as well as his great elation at the discovery of an authentic, genuine talent whose work showed independence and innovation.[9]

He sought innovation all the time and impressed on the minds of his contemporaries the necessity of a new kind of literature: "Literature, like other fine arts, is a picture of life ... [This picture] is wonderful when it is first created. But it is never meant to be chewed and vomited on paper generation after generation, or to be adored and sanctified..."[10] In his introduction to Mujaddidūn wa Mujtarrūn he exclaimed: "Let us leave the ruminators to live on what is in their bellies, and let us create a new kind of food ... let us graft onto our literature [some modern material] for it has become wild ..."[11] And what more poignant statement than this: "For centuries our eyes have been set in our backs".[12]

For him every epoch has its own fashion.[13] However, he forbade the poets to tamper with two things: grammar and language.[14] By language

he meant the basic rules only.[15] However, in his opinion, words are all poetic, "for the secret of eloquence is in the construction; it is in the coupling of words".[16] As for the formation of phrases and expressions, the poet had a free hand, for "poetry is a factory in which expressions are made".[17] Modern Arabs, he insisted, "are bored with the expressions of the Classical poets just as we are bored with a tune which we hear every day. Our resort to these decrepit old expressions kills the meaning and deprives us of the power of thinking."[18] What we need, he asserted, are new expressions taken from our present life.[19] He constantly attacked literary cliches and stock poetic materials.[20] In his view true poetry could not be separated from its author.[21]

'Abbūd's writings were always in anticipation of what was to happen and seldom formulations of what had already happened. He was a true pioneer and a leader of thought like al-Shidyāq and al-Rīḥāni both of whom he admired very much.[22] Even in the fifties, when experimental poetry had arrived at adventures hitherto unprecedented in the whole history of Arabic poetry, he did not show surprise or opposition. His acceptance of free verse which began to be written at the end of the forties could have been expected only from the younger generation in the Arab world, a great contrast to al-'Aqqād, once avant-garde and pioneer, who opposed free verse most bitterly and destructively especially from the end of the fifties till his death when he was able to manoeuvre his attacks from a position of strength as an official spokesman of the Committee for Poetry in the Government-sponsored Higher Council for Art and Literature in Cairo. In fact, 'Abbūd had anticipated the poetic movement in many of his writings. "Poetry", he said, "is the victim of metres and rhymes. I do not rebel against the science of prosody, or call for prose poetry ... but I see that in Arabic metres there is a musical unity which creates a special melody, and as soon as our poet finds words to fit the metre, he gets this melody. This is

why he does not bother much about his poetic diction, whereas we see other poets in the world create from the harmony of words a music characteristic of the poet himself ..."[23] In another place he says: "Poetry is music before anything else. There is a meaning embodied in this music which, if it loses, it becomes no more than muddled tunes that do not thrill. And just as music is renovated and diversified, so must poetry be. This can only be attained by creating new expressions that have a melody and an echo and a good effect on the spirit."[24]

He linked literature with life. He says: "literature is not only a criticism of life as Mathew Arnold says ... it is a rebellion against life ... and is equal to it ... capable of correcting its crookedness as though with a sword."[25] Indeed, he is one of the few Arab writers who opened the doors to the flow of vibrant life.[26]

For him, the duty of the critic was to treat the works of art 'artistically'. "Poets did not write so that we may study their poems as historic documents. Poetry is neither history, nor geography nor science."[27] In his view criticism was a creative work which should be supported by knowledge. The critic, without this creative side, is "neither a critic, nor a writer ..."[28]

As a critic he was an impressionist. His method was to examine the literary work, and show its points of strength and weakness, always careful to point out its originality or its shamness. This he was able to do because he was a true lover of literature and a fine connoisseur of originality and art. Thus he was able to fulfil the most important prerequisite which he himself demanded of a critic: creativity. He was unmatched in originality, variety and authenticity.[29] The second pre-requisite, that of culture, was also his in great measure. This is immediately obvious from a perusal of any of his essays. Ancient and modern writers and poets, from East and West, saints, prophets, legendary

figures, were constantly alive in his mind and were introduced into his writings in the most natural manner. "He seemed to soar over time and place ... as if distances and epochs merged in his consciousness and he would see human life in its unity and continuity like a climbing river flowing in his heart."[30] In the course of discussion he could speak at once on Islamic culture, Christian traditions, Western authors and Classical Arab authors and thinkers. From one single article, his essay on Abū Shabakah, these extracts will suffice to show his most original method: "جاء في اساطير اليونان ان احدى البنات المدعوة سيرنكس فرت[31] من وجه الآلهَ "بان" الى ضفة نهر وتحولت الى رماح قصب"

"فنتذكّر ونحن نقرأ[32] "قد يكون اقرب شبها بقصبة الفارابي التي ذكرتها غير مرة" and "افاعي الفردوس كلمة جرير في عمر ابن ابي ربيعة ..."[33] But this is not all. Here is an introduction of Christian tradition[34] "اذا ما اشرفت على افاعي الفردوس" and another of Western poetry "جثم عليك جو سادوم وعامورة ..."[35] "اذا قابلنا بين شمشون ابو شبكة وشمشون دى فيني رأينا قصيدة دى فيني تنهج نهج القصة وسمتها، بينا شاعرنا العربي لا يخرج في شمشون عن نمطنا"

There are many more examples of these in this essay. Such examples are also numerous throughout his works. Another remarkable thing about him was his ability to simplify relations not only between people but also between cultures. He looked at whatever he got acquainted with of world literature in a simple, awe-free manner. Thus he was able to release his readers from some of the complexes of inferiority to Western concepts and literary contribution which so many Western educated critics had instilled in their Arab readers. His manner was natural, intimate and never baffled or dazzled. It was that of the master who understood things for what they were, and who regarded the literary heritage of humanity as belonging to all lovers of literature.[36]

His manner was both passionate and sincere. He showed great moral courage not hesitating to shake off the halo from the heads of the self-appointed princes of literature in the Arab world who were enjoying

undeserved prestige. This has been illustrated in several places throughout this work. He declared over and over again that he would never let friendship prevent him from telling the truth about a literary work.[37] His greatest weapon, after that of truth, was irony. He was a master of ironic criticism, an attitude much needed to help dispel the false impressions which had been confirmed in the minds of the younger generations about established authors of uncertain literary value. Writing about Al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghir (Bishārah al-Khouri) he says "

"لا بد للشاعر من جو او محيط ـ سمه ما شئت ـ يسرح فيه حين يعمل قصيدة . اما محيط اخينا بشارة في قصيدته هذه ، فكان في السماوات العلى ، بل في السماء السابعة التي زارها ماربولس وعاد يخبر المؤمنين عنها ، وقد يكون فاقه بشارة ان بلغ سدرة المنتهى . " [38]

'Abbūd has many books to his credit on literature, biography and criticism, as well as some original story writing. His most famous books of literary criticism are 'Ala 'l-Mihakk (1946), Mujaddidūn wa Mujtarrūn (1948), Dimaqs wa Urjuwān (1952), Fi 'l-Mukhtabar (1952), Judud wa Qudamā' (1954), and Naqadāt 'Ābir (1959). The first three are on contemporary poets only and the last are on contemporary poets and writers. His book Ruwwād al-Nahdah al-Hadīthah (1952) is a history of the literary revival in Lebanon in the nineteenth century. His historic sketches and his portraits of persons such as al-Shidyāq and al-Rīḥāni are well studied and explained, but are at the same time considerably coloured by his personality.

A modern critic might not agree with all the judgments of Marūn 'Abbūd. No doubt he was occasionally too harsh on some poets such as Aḥmad al-Ṣāfi al-Najafi, whose rebellion in poetry he did not realise. Nor did he assimilate all the ideas on Symbolism.[39] He was too harsh, also, on Egyptian scholarship in saying that Egyptians were dependent in their criticism of poetry and literature on the Orientalists before whom they suffered "a paralysis of thinking".[40] This is an unacceptable generalization at a time when most writers in the Arab world were dependent

on Western writers and critics. However, one cannot reject 'Abbūd's vehement attacks on the literary compromise shown by such critics as Ṭāhā Ḥusain when he pronounced al-'Aqqād the prince of poets,[41] as has been discussed. Nor can one blame 'Abbūd for harshly criticising al-'Aqqād's constant pretentions at poetry writing, with that merciless irony so characteristic of him.[42] One can sense here 'Abbūd's artistic anger and one finds it easy to understand his fears in the thirties for the poetic taste of the readers in general. Egypt had succeeded in producing a great literary energy and had been for many decades, the literary centre of the Arab world, and authors in the Arab world looked up to Egypt as a model and support.[43] 'Abbūd must have feared that this situation would tend to be sometimes extremely harmful to the young aspirants in the art of poetry and literature. It was his responsibility to point out to them, without any compromise, the shamness of a poetic experiment or of a literary situation, because the general reader in the Arab world at the time lacked self-confidence and independent judgment on the whole and leaned greatly on the leaders of thought and literature in Egypt.[44] An Arab in spirit, he was, moreover, greatly angered by the movement of Egyptianization which took place in Egypt at the time.[45]

'Abbūd marked a period of literary development in the Arab world, the period of the preparedness for the poetic revolution. During that period he was not only an intellectual and critical force behind the development of poetry, but also a great spiritual force which prompted the young poets towards endeavour and experiment. His passion, his candour, his dedication, his moral courage were an inspiration for the literary youth. The pages of his books are vivid with the personal charm and radiance of that lively personality. It is impossible to do justice to this great critic in only a few pages. His works, his critical role, his personality, so little written about, deserve a much longer discussion than this work can afford.

(ii) Muhammad Mandūr

While 'Abbūd's main contribution covered the years between the twenties and the end of the fifties, Muhammad Mandūr (1908?-1965) gave his central contribution in the forties. It is on one important book, Fi'l-Mīzān al-Jadīd (1944) that his reputation as a critic fully armed with modern concepts was established.

Mandūr's life seems to have been besieged by many negative forces which diverted a great deal of his energy and creativity. He had been sent on a scholarship to Paris in 1930, having graduated from the College of Literature at Cairo University in 1929.[46] He spent in Paris about nine years but was forced to go back to his own country when the war broke out. The fact that Mandūr, in his long stay in Paris did not obtain his doctorate for which purpose he had been sent there in the first place did not seem to be outweighed by the well-founded culture he had acquired there.[47] The academic world judged him rather severely and bureaucratic routine made it very difficult for him to obtain an academic job which he well deserved.[48] This was the beginning of a long and sometimes bitter struggle which lost to Arabic literature a great part of the freshness and creativity of one of the most promising Arab critics in modern times. For Mandūr was not merely well versed in Latin and Greek and in French literature,[49] but had assimilated that culture well. It is apparent from the first essays he published and which constituted his critical book Fī'l-Mīzān al-Jadīd that he had come back fully armed with new tools of criticism and enthusiastically determined to apply them to modern Arabic literature. He had also studied Phonetics in Paris and had done laboratory experiments on Arabic metres[50] which he applied in his criticism and writings.[51]

Mandūr did succeed in getting a minor teaching job at Cairo University and then at the newly established University of Alexandria.[52] In 1943 he wrote his thesis on systematic criticism of the Classical Arabs[53]

and obtained his doctorate with honours.[54] But that did not help to better his academic situation by obtaining a promotion for him.[55] He resigned in the same year and entered the arena of public life, going first to journalism.[56] He also entered party politics.[57]

Up to his death Mandūr persisted in catering to journalism either as a professional or as a free lance writer. He also lectured intermittantly at certain colleges and institutes in Egypt among which was the Institute of Higher Studies affiliated to the Arab League.[58] This direct and constant relationship with journalism, desultory teaching, and politics might explain to us why Mandūr did not continue his career as a critic smoothly and uncompromisingly. His life was constantly crowded and troubled by three factors: "politics, financial need, and ill health".[59]

This was tragic, for Mandūr the critic had opened his career with courage and originality, as well as with a kind of unbiased objectivity which was an example to other critics who centred their works only on the literature of their own country. Mandūr was the first Egyptian critic who studied al-Mahjar poetry with enthusiasm and regarded it as much higher in poetic value than the Egyptian poetry at the time.[60] In fact, his essays on al-Mahjar poetry were the greatest items of attraction in his book. His description of the element of "tone" in the Mahjar poetry was most original at the time. It has been mentioned how he described this poetry as "al-shi'r al-mahmūs" (poetry a mi-voix).[61] He compared it with the oratorical tone of poets such as the Egyptian Mahmūd Ḥasan Ismā'īl[62] and took great pains in explaining its greater aesthetic effect. "Poetry a mi-voix" (al-shi'r al-mahmūs), he said, "is not a sign of weakness, for it is only the strong poet who can whisper so that you can feel his voice warmly coming out of the depths of his soul. It is not like the oratorical tone which dominates our poetry and spoils it by alienating it from the spirit, from truth and from the heart ..."[63] In another place he says "Oratorical resonance cannot elevate poetry no matter how strong

it is."[64]

This well concentrated attack on resonance and the oratorical tone in Arabic poetry has been one of the major elements of attack which the avant-garde poets of the fifties used against traditional poetry. Mandūr was not the first to attack this element in Arabic poetry but he was definitely the first to elaborate it and to bring the argument to its logical conclusion: that there have been experiments in modern Arabic poetry which have succeeded in getting rid of too much rhetoric and oratory and in expressing instead the intimate voice of the poet. This, he insisted, is the poetry of life and humanity.[65]

Mandūr was immediately attacked by other literary arbiters in Egypt among whom was Sayyid Qaṭub, al-'Aqqād's greatest admirer.[66] This is not surprising, for Mandūr had not spared al-'Aqqād from his attacks.[67] Moreover, the discussion of tone as a major element in poetry was a relatively novel topic and one could not expect it to be understood even by some educated people. Mandūr himself did not give it a definite term, nor did he try to discuss any of its other functions and qualities. The division of tone into "whispering and oratorical" is only a very limited attempt at discussing a rather many sided topic. Therefore, Mandūr's attempt here did not succeed in introducing to the Arab critics the necessity of studying "tone" as a varied element in poetry. This study of tone as an element was attempted, with a good degree of success, at a later date by the Baḥraini poet Ibrāhīm al-'Urayyiḍ. However al-'Urayyiḍ did not give to "tone" its right translation which should have been "lahjah (لهجة)", but called it "style" "uslūb (اسلوب)", which is quite a different thing. He also mixed 'tone' in some examples with theme. Nevertheless, this was an extremely interesting attempt by al-'Urayyiḍ and proved once and for all that the Classical style was not necessarily always oratorical. Al-'Urayyiḍ gave examples from Classical as well as from

modern poetry to show the different tones with which the poet can and did address the world.[68] It is a great pity that this book is never studied or mentioned by avant-garde poets or critics, because it is a genuine and original contribution to the study of this major element in poetry.

But Mandūr's attack on resonance and oratorical style was very important and served a great purpose later on, as has been mentioned.[69] It must be emphasised here that Mandūr regarded "music" as a major element in poetry,[70] a concept which he retained all his life.[71] He also called for coherence and depth in the element of emotion in poetry,[72] for poetic vision,[73] for nobility of feeling,[74] for strength of spirit,[75] for beauty and truth.[76] He further demanded that poets should try to acquire a rather wide culture.[77]

Mandūr wrote several essays on criticism and entered into long arguments with other critics in Egypt on certain topics current at the time.[78] It seemed that his aim was "to revise the prevailing standards".[79] Al-Mīzān al-Jadīd is regarded as "the beginning of a new phase in criticism, a phase dependent on a deep and wide culture, a fine sophisticated taste, a sustained sincerity, and seriousness in work".[80]

It is beyond the aim of this work to discuss Mandūr's ideas on criticism, for only ideas dealing with poetry as an art are relevant here. Mīzān is interesting for us here, therefore, in only some of its materials. In his essay on Taufīq al-Ḥakīm's use of the myth of Pygmalion, he says, "This trend /of using myths in literature/ is a good omen, capable of renovating our /literary/ life but on one condition: that the innovator achieves a deep, human and beautiful adaptation. But if we adopt only the rind and the skeleton of things and leave the essence and hidden meanings, we will lose our authenticity without achieving a /new/ and genuine /sensibility/."[81] He insisted that a man of letters should try to possess /i.e. to assimilate/ the knowledge he acquires, for it is only

through such a possession that this spiritual wealth with its potential forces can grow spontaneously within us.[82] He then goes on to compare the use of Greek and other myths by European authors such as G.B. Shaw in his use of the Pygmalion myth in Pygmalion, P.B. Shelley in his use of the Prometheus myth in"Prometheus Unbound" and A.P.G. Gide in his use of the same myth in his "Prometheus Misbound" (Prométhée mal Enchainé).[83] Naturally Mandūr is full of praise for these European authors with whom he compares al-Ḥakīm unfavourably,[84] thus himself sharing in the development of the complex of awe from Western authors and works of literature which ʿAbbūd so naturally avoided.

He discusses again the use of myths by another author, the poet ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā. Ṭāhā's bad use of the Greek myths in his poetic work Arwāḥ wa Ashbāḥ which is the topic of Mandūr's essay has been discussed above. What is important here is Mandūr's comments on the use of myths. "It is good to take myths as an element in poetry. Many great poets had done that before us. But we must succeed as they succeeded, and this will be by possessing our knowledge of them, for we cannot create new values out of a well-known myth without assimilating it first."[85] Ṭāhā's use of the Greek myths in Arwāḥ wa Ashbāḥ, he said,was flat, inaccurate and hasty.[86] It is rather significant of Mandūr's loss of heart after this first flourishing stage of his critical career that he, despite this immense interest he showed at the beginning of his career in the vital use of myths in literature, did not show real interest in the successful and sophisticated use of myths by the avant-garde poets of the fifties, contrary to what one would expect.

Another important topic which Mandūr discussed in this book was the metres of poetry. It has been said above that Mandūr had made some phonetic experiments with Arabic metres when he was in Paris. When D. Khashabah, another Egyptian writer, wrote about Arabic metres comparing

them with metres in European languages, Mandūr felt well equipped with the results of his experiments to answer him with authority. Khashabah had said that English and European poetry is based on the single foot, unlike Arabic poetry which is based on the complete metre.[87] Mandūr answered by saying that Arabic poetry, like any other poetry in the East or West is made up of feet which combine to make metres. Some metres in Arabic are " متجاوبة التفاعيل " i.e. made up of the combination of two feet, and some others are " متساوية التفاعيل", i.e. made up of the repetition of the same foot.[88] Poetry, he insisted, is characterised by the method in which feet are arranged.[89]

This is interesting because it brought to the open the discussion of feet tafā'īl and tried to show that it is the foot which is the basis of poetry and not the finished metre. The free verse movement which successfully took place a few years later exploited, to a great extent, the idea of tafā'īl as a basis for metres. Even if one tried hard, one would find it extremely difficult to ascertain whether Mandūr's discussion on metres in this book had anything to do with the successful experiments with free verse at the end of the forties. It is probable that the experimentalists had got acquainted with it, because it became very famous in the forties. However, experiments in free verse had been going on for a long time and the whole poetic situation in the Arab world at the end of the forties was ready for a major experiment in form (and context), as will be discussed soon. But Mandūr's writings might have furnished a technical detail needed as a further incentive at the time.

His conclusions on the durations of feet with zihāf* "tafā'īl muzaḥḥafah" are interesting. He came out with the conclusion that feet with zihāf need not have shorter durations than normal feet. This is achieved by a process of compensation which takes place automatically

* By zihāf is meant the pronunciation of what is a long syllable in one rendering as a short syllable in another rendering.

on rendering. It is true that this process of compensation lengthens other parts of the foot. For instance, another long vowel in the foot can be prolonged, or a consonant can be prolonged; where the consonant is of a continuant nature such as l, or one of the fricatives, such as s, this can be heard. Where the consonant is a plosive, e.g. b, d,* the duration of the closure can be increased slightly, and this may sound like a moment of silence.[90] "The silence is, indeed, part of the articulation of the consonants."[91]

However, Mandūr does not say why we can apply zihāf to certain syllables in a foot but cannot tamper with other syllables in certain feet. For instance, we can shorten the last long syllable in fa'ūlun ⏑ – – (which is the basic foot of al-mutaqārab) which becomes fa'ūlu ⏑ – ⏑, but we cannot shorten the first long syllable, because by doing so we change the whole quality of the foot which then becomes fa'ilun ⏑ ⏑ –, the basic foot of the khabab metre. It is apparent that there are syllables which are basic to the foot and which decide the basic rhythm of a foot and hence of the metre involved. However, since Mandūr did not venture to discuss this problem, it would be irrelevant to pursue it here any further.

But Mandūr discussed another idea in his chapter on metres. This is his idea of stressed syllables in Arabic metres (Ictus). He regards Ictus as basic and predominant in Arabic poetry. Giving a verse by the pre-Islamic poet Umru'u al-Qais:

وليل كموج البحر ارخى سدوله علي با نواع الهموم ليبتلي

he concludes that there is a pattern of stresses over the following long syllables:

/ ⏑ U ⏑ * ⏑ U ⏑ * / – U ⏑ * ⏑ U ⏑ / ⏑ U ⏑ * – U ⏑ * / – U ⏑ * – U ⏑ **

---

* The above statement has been slightly corrected. Mandūr, in fact, has regarded s as a continuant and has included f, a fricative, among the plosives.

** These patterns are to be read from right to left. The asterisks divide the feet.

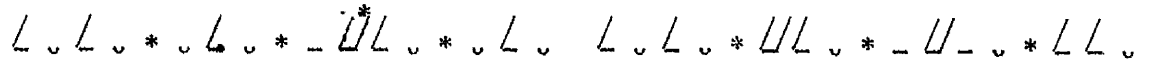
where syllables with two lines above them have the main and basic stresses and those with one line have the secondary stresses.[92] He then brings forward several conclusions:

1. That the stress takes place only on a long syllable.
2. That in the tawīl metre, for example, the stresses are as follows: there is a regular stress on the second syllable of fa'ūlun ⏑ – –, while on long foot like mafā'īlun ⏑ – – –, there are two stresses. a basic one on the first long syllable and a secondary one on the last long syllable.
3. That the rhythm is formed by the repetition of these stresses on the same syllables in each foot for it is the repetition of this vocal phenomenon over definite time intervals that forms the rhythm, and not merely the quantitative quality of a metre.[93]

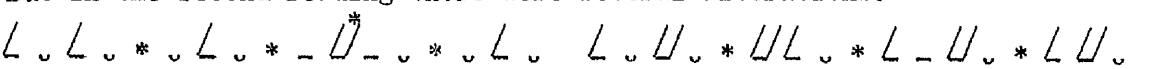
The basic idea in Mandūr's theory, i.e. the definite stresses over definite time intervals immediately arouses astonishment if read by an Arab poet who has practised any sort of poetry reading, for in Arabic the stresses seem to be very changeable. Although he is probably right in suggesting that stress falls only on long syllables, one cannot accept as absolute his assigning main and secondary stress to particular long syllables in any given foot, nor the corollary of this, that the other long syllables can never be stressed. He does not describe the experiments which he conducted in the phonetics laboratory, and one accepts his pattern of marking the verses, but only as one of several different patterns, corresponding to one of several different ways of reading the verses. What the present writer is putting forward in criticising Mandūr's theory, is that there is more than one way of reading the Arabic verses, and that the different ways are possible because of the flexibility in the distribution of stress and duration features within the particular type of foot. The present writer recorded two different readings of the above

verse, and has examined the pitch and intensity curves obtained from these recordings in the phonetics laboratory at SOAS.[94]

In the first reading the stresses were on the following syllables (read from right to left):



But in the second reading there were several alterations:



In the two readings, the syllable most stressed is the second syllable of the second foot of the second hemistich, marked with a raised star, a syllable which is not stressed at all in Mandūr's example. Other stresses might or might not agree with his pattern, as a quick comparison will reveal.

The stresses vary, apparently, according to the reader. A bad reader might stress certain syllables without any apparent reason and his reading will sound bad perhaps, but the rhythm of the metre will not change. A good reader might stress a syllable for one or more reasons. Firstly, he might be guided by the meaning he is presenting. Thus in a famous verse by an Abbasid poet satirising the Abbasid dynasty in defence of the Umayyads, he refers disparagingly to Ibrāhīm, son of the Caliph al-Mahdi, who was a singer (as well as to ʿAliyyah, his sister, also fond of music and singing):

منكم علية ام منهم وكان لكم شيخ المغنين ابراهيم ام لهم

The reader therefore might want to stress the two last syllables in the word Ibrāhīm which reads thus:  . ʿAliyyatu, shaikhu and al-mughannīn might be other words he would be inclined to stress because of their importance to the meaning.

Secondly, among the long syllables, it is the CV: syllables, that is those with a long vowel, rather than the CVC syllables, that is those with a short vowel, and ending in a consonant with sukūn, that a reader might

tend to stress because of the liberal and fluid flexibility of long vowels and their capacity to be prolonged with ease. This helps the stress by giving greater fullness to the voice.

Thirdly, a reader might tend further to stress syllables that terminate with voiced nasal continuants such as n and m[95] rather than with plosive consonants such as b, ṭ, ḍ, d, t, k,[96] or with gutturals such as h, ḥ, ʿain, gh, kh, etc. It is the observation of her own renderings of verse that leads the present writer to put this forward as an hypothesis even though it would be out of place in this chapter to go into too many technical details. The subject could perhaps be more fully elaborated in the future.

Fourthly, in the experiment made at the phonetics laboratory at SOAS another verse in the tawīl metre was also rendered twice. In the second reading the first hemistich ran into the second hemistich, changing the whole timing of the verse.

These observations seem very important in the light of the great flexibility this potential quality of stress inherent in Arabic metres of all kinds gives the reader of poetry. It is greatly exploited by poets who are in the habit of declaiming their poetry to an audience. In modern Arabic poetry the kind of verse called "platform poetry" in this work, depends greatly on the manipulation of the living voice and makes great use of the flexibility of long syllables in Arabic metrics.

The three main contributions to the development of modern Arabic poetry in Mīzān are M. Mandūr's comparison between the soft, intimate tone and the oratorical tone in Arabic poetry and his condemnation of the latter, his study of Arabic metres and his encouragement of a vital use of myth in literature. In his writings in this book one perceives originality, sincerity, purpose, clarity of ideas and a good use of a well assimilated culture. Unfortunately, the continuous battles of public and literary life

lost him his freshness and originality.

But in Mīzān Mandūr's love of theorising and writing about literature in general terms can also be seen. Many of his later books cater to this type of writing. His books Fi 'l-Adab wa 'l-Naqd, (Cairo, 1949), Al-Adab wa Madhāhibuh, (Cairo 1955), Al-Adab wa Funūnuh, (Cairo 1963) and Fann al-Shi'r, (Cairo 1959?) are all of this kind in which Mandūr is interested in giving short resumés of types of criticism, genres of poetry and literature and some descriptions of the different literary schools and movements such as Romanticism, Symbolism, Surrealism, Existentialism, etc.[97] These books are only small volumes and they overlap considerably.[98] His book Fann al-Shi'r passed nearly unnoticed by the modern reader. For while Mīzān was an anticipation of the movements of the new poetry and contained some stimulating and vigorously avant-garde ideas, this more didactic book appeared after a fertile and more sophisticated period in a generation that was looking for more advanced formulae for its new movement. Mandūr, in fact, put forward some ideas concerning epic poetry and poetic drama which he regarded to have become outdated genres. It is apparent from this that Mandūr was out of touch with the trend of poetic criticism in vogue at the time, a criticism that depended much on T.S. Eliot's and other modern English speaking critics and poets and which had shown special interest in renovating the poetic drama.

Some of his other books are on modern literary history such as his mature and informative book in three volumes Al-Shi'r al-Misri ba'd Shauqi, quoted many times above.[99] His book Al-Naqd wa 'l-Nuqqād al-Mu'āsirūn (Cairo, n.d.) is a very interesting account of some modern Arab critics who are, with the exception of M. Nu'aimah, all Egyptians. 'Abbūd is flatly excluded as well as all other non-Egyptian critics and writers on poetry and literature such as Iḥsān 'Abbās, Ra'īf al-Khouri and others. These unfortunate omissions show Mandūr's later trend of concentrating his

efforts mostly on the Egyptian contribution, a great contrast to his initial wider interests. In fact, Mandūr, since the fifties, was not able to catch up with the poetic events that were quickly taking place in the Arab world, and his understanding of the new poetic movement in the fifties proved to be deficient. In a discussion published in Al-Ādāb magazine in 1962, Mandūr described the new poetic movement as different from the older poetry by its musical arrangement,[100] a point seized upon by Lawīs 'Awaḍ who rightly retorted that Mandūr's description is only an external one.[101]

There is no doubt that Mandūr was led to this deficient outlook by the kind of literary life he was forced to lead in Egypt. He must have felt that he had to assert himself to the Egyptian authors and literary arbiters around him and these, previous to the fifties, had concerned themselves mainly with the Egyptian literary output. In concentrating mainly on the Egyptian literary forum, he allowed himself to remain in ignorance of what was happening in the poetry of his own language outside his country, a deficiency no modern critic can afford to have.[102] Basically, however, he had no regional prejudice and if he had had enough scope one feels confident that he would have kept up the good work he had begun in the early forties.[103]

His change from an impressionistic critic in his early works to a social realist critic in his later years[104] did not make itself felt in the field of poetry on any important scale.[105] His influence on modern Arabic poetry was rendered in his earlier career. As a critic of poetry, Mandūr will be remembered mainly for his impressionistic criticism in Mīzān in which work he gave the greatest service to modern Arabic poetry.

Footnotes

1. See ʿAli Saʿd, "Al-Thauriyyah wa Masādiruhā ʿInd Mārūn ʿAbbūd", published in Al-Ādāb magazine, July, 1962, p.1.
2. See Ahādīth al-Qaryah, second edition, Beirut, 1963, pp.109-120, in which ʿAbbūd describes his studying at al-Ḥikama School between 1905-1906.
3. For his study of French see ibid., p.116. On the same page he expresses his sorrow for not having studied English.
4. Ibid., pp.215-216.
5. See Anṭūn Qāzān, "Mārūn ʿAbbūd", Al-Ādāb, October, 1962, p.7.
6. Saʿd, Al-Ādāb, July, 1962, pp.1-3 and pp.65-67 where the author discusses ʿAbbūd's social rebellion.
7. In the title of his book Mujaddidūn wa Mujtarrūn, published in 1948. He mentions it regularly throughout his works.
8. Comments on this are scattered throughout his critical books.
9. For examples from a single work Mujaddidūn, see his articles on Yūsuf Ghuṣūb, Ilyās Abū Shabakah, ʿUmar Abū Rīshah, Nāzik al-Malāʾikah and Gibrān.
10. Ibid., pp.18-9; see also Dimaqs, p.17.
11. Mujaddidūn, p.8.
12. Ibid., p.9; see also his interesting essay on poetry and the poets in ʿAla ʾl-Mihakk, pp.31-5.
13. Mujaddidūn, p.98.
14. Ibid., p.8.
15. Ibid., p.93.
16. Dimaqs, p.246.
17. Mujaddidūn, p.7.
18. Ibid., p.34.
19. Ibid., p.36.
20. Ibid., p.18.
21. ʿAla ʾl-Mihakk, p.17.
22. See his books on them, Saqr Lubnān and Amīn al-Rīḥāni have been been mentioned above.
23. Dimaqs, p.17.
24. Mujaddidūn, p.34; see also ʿAli Saʿd, Al-Ādāb, August, 1962, pp.74-5.
25. Dimaqs, p.233.
26. Saʿd, op.cit., p.4.
27. Dimaqs, p.237; see also p.213.
28. Ibid., p.260; see also pp.231-68.
29. M. Najm, "Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah", Al-Adab al-ʿArabi fī Āthār al-Dārisīn, p.345; Anṭūn Qāzān, op.cit., pp.6-7.

30. Sa'd, loc.cit.
31. Mujaddidūn, p.98.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., p.100.
35. Ibid., pp.105-6.
36. See Sa'd, loc.cit.
37. Dimaqs, pp.226 and 255.
38. Mujaddidūn, p.54.
39. Yūsuf Ghuṣūb commented on 'Abbūd's incapacity to assimilate such sophisticated Western poetic concepts in his letter to the present writer dated 2nd October, 1963.
40. Fi 'l-Mukhtabar, p.291.
41. 'Ala 'l-Miḥakk, pp.21-9.
42. Ibid., pp.193-237.
43. They did not get this support always, as has been shown in several examples throughout this work.
44. See Krachkovsky, "Fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth", Al-Risālah magazine, No.171, 12th October, 1936, p.1667, where he describes Egyptian literary leadership.
45. See for example his essay, "Al-Adab al-Fir'auni wa 'l-Duktūr Adham wa 'l-'Aqqād", Dimaqs, pp.214-22.
46. Mandūr in an interview in Al-Ādāb, January, 1961, p.37.
47. For the quality of his culture see Najm's study, "Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah", p.365.
48. On his struggle for an academic job see L. 'Awaḍ, Al-Thaurah wa 'l-Adab, Cairo, 1967, pp.15-9.
49. Ibid., pp.13-4; Najm, loc.cit.
50. 'Awaḍ, op.cit., p.13.
51. See Mīzān, pp.226-40; see also Majallat Kulliyyat al-Ādāb, University of Alexandria, first number, 1943, for an article by him on Arabic metres, entitled "Awzān al-Shi'r", referred to in Mīzān, p.240 n.
52. 'Awaḍ, op.cit., pp.15-8.
53. Ibid., p.18.
54. Published under the title of Al-Naqd al-Manhaji 'Inda 'l-'Arab, it is a brilliant interpretation of the methods and aims of Classical Arab criticism.
55. 'Awaḍ, op.cit., p.18.
56. Ibid., p.20.
57. Ibid.; Najm, op.cit., p.357.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid., p.356.

60. See his essay in Mīzān, pp.69-96. For his comparison of this poetry with Egyptian poetry see ibid., pp.75 and 102.

61. See ibid., p.90; see Al-Ādāb, January, 1961, p.42, where he re-asserts his admiration for this kind of poetry.

62. Mīzān, pp.97-102.

63. Ibid., p.69.

64. Ibid., p.99; see also p.102.

65. Ibid., pp.75 and 90.

66. See ibid., pp.97 and 103-6; see also M.A. Saḥarti, Al-Shi'r al-Mu'āṣir 'alā Dau' al-Naqd al-Hadīth where he attacks Mandūr for criticism of Egyptian poets, pp.209-10, but tends to appease him later on, p.213 by agreeing with most of his ideas.

67. Mīzān, pp.97 and 106-8.

68. See his book Al-Asālīb al-Shi'riyyah, Beirut, 1950.

69. See Muhammad al-Nuwaihi, Thaqāfat al-Nāqid al-Adabi, Cairo, 1949, p.396, where he praises Mandūr's campaign against resonance and the oratorical style.

70. Mīzān, p.90.

71. See Al-Ādāb, January, 1962, p.3.

72. Mīzān, pp.99 and 102.

73. Ibid., p.99.

74. Ibid., p.102.

75. Ibid., p.90.

76. Ibid., pp.90 and 91.

77. Ibid., p.12.

78. See for example his several essays on Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arri, ibid., pp.129-55; on criticism, pp.162-89 and 202-6; and on language, pp.207-11, etc.

79. Najm, "Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah", p.357.

80. Ibid.

81. Mīzān, p.16.

82. Ibid., p.17.

83. Ibid., pp.17 and 19.

84. Ibid., pp.18 and 19-20.

85. Ibid., p.30.

86. Ibid., pp.31-3.

87. Quoted by Mandūr, ibid., p.226.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid., p.227.

90. Ibid., p.238.

91. Quotation by Mr. J. Carnochan; see below footnote 94.

92. Mīzān, p.239; however, a mistake (probably a printing mistake) occurs in the text which reverses the order of the lines.

93. Ibid.

94. The present writer is indebted to Mr. J. Carnochan of the phonetics department at SOAS for his kind help in supervising the experiments and explaining the results and the technical details to the present writer.

95. These two nasal continuants have particular importance in Quranic reading or chanting and are stressed greatly whenever they have a sukūn, provided they are not followed by a guttural in which case they are not stressed at all. In poetic reading, however, there are no such rules for stress, but syllables carry with them their latent tendencies for stress or otherwise.

96. These, with the exception of t and k are called "hurūf al-Qalqalah" which, in Quranic reading, are slightly moved when they have a sukun. This is of interest to us here because it points to an inherent embarrassment in stressing them.

97. See M. Nuwaihi, Thaqāfat al-Nāqid al-Adabi, p.394, where he criticises Mandur for his insistence on writing on literary "methods, principles and theories".

98. See the repetition of the discussion of the poetic schools in Al-Adab wa Madhāhibuh and Fi 'l-Adab wa 'l-Naqd; see also the repetition of the discussion of the poetic genres in Fann al-Shi'r and Al-Adab wa Funūnuh, etc.

99. Mandūr has other small books on some modern poets; see his books Khalīl Mutrān, and Ismā'il Sabri.

100. The January number, p.3.

101. Ibid., p.4.

102. On the occasion of a lecture he gave at "al-Maqāsid al-Islāmiyyah" in Beirut in 1958, Mandūr admitted that he was not in touch with the literary activity outside Egypt; see Shi'r quarterly, Beirut, No.3., p.113.

103. See Najm, "Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah", p.358 for an assessment of his later career.

104. See his discussion of this in Al-Ādāb magazine, January, 1961, pp.38-9; see Nuwaihi, op.cit., pp.390 and 394 for a criticism of his impressionistic method in Mīzān and other early writings.

105. It was his book Qadāyā Jadīdah fī Adabinā al-Ḥadīth (Beirut, 1958) that was meant to exemplify his new critical outlook. It is a small volume with only six essays on poetry, some of them mere commentary; see his chapter "Haula 'l-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth", pp.88-91, as an example of light discussion.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE DEVELOPMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES AFTER 1947

SECTION 1: AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This work has attempted to tell the story of modern Arabic poetry from its renaissance in the nineteenth century through modern times. The general movement of this poetry was towards acquiring strength and modernity. This was linked with the sudden awakening of the Arab people to the reality of the world around them, a world far more advanced and developed than their own. The fight for freedom and progress brought with it a general aspiration on the part of poets and men of letters to express themselves through a medium more adequate to the needs of the age. An awakening to the necessity of education brought about a revolution in the cultural situation with a special emphasis on two aspects, namely a revival of the Arab nation's own treasures of past literature, and an attempt to acquire knowledge and guidance from Western literary experience.

The poetic situation in the Arab world was changing subtly but decisively. Its successful liaison with its own poetic roots in past great works of poetry gave it the necessary strength of form, language and poetic structure to experiment with new tools and to face the poetic adventure, if not always with success, at least with ever-renewed vigour. The history of Arabic poetry in the first five decades of this century is for the most part the history of continuous experimentation and speculation in form, diction, imagery, tone, attitude and theme, based both on the instinctive needs of a poetry still in many of its aspects Mediaeval, even in a modern world, as well as on the conscious knowledge which the poets and critics had of these needs as they began to understand them through their first-hand knowledge of Western poetry and Western poetic theory. So it happened that the poetic experience of centuries in the West was compressed into a few decades, and the over-all picture is dazzling to the observer. From the neo-Classical revival, poetry went quickly

through the Romantic experience, and succeeded in embracing Symbolism and a little Surrealism. In form the experimentation was continuous and determined, if not always successful. The poetic diction gained in modernity, subtlety and urbanity. A great diversity of attitudes appeared quite early as the Mahjar poets of "Al-Rābiṭah al-Qalamiyyah" felt free and adequately armed to express their own, which were often basically different attitudes. Their successful experiment was followed by a corresponding change in attitude in some of the poets writing in the Arab world in the thirties and forties (Romantic and Symbolist). This change, although not always healthy or expressive of general needs, was a decisive change for poetry itself, a colourful gain in diversity that enriched poetry in the extreme. With the change in attitudes came a change in tone, and that too, beginning in the Americas at the hands of such Mahjar poets as Fawzi al-Ma'lūf, M. Nu'aimah, N. 'Arīḍah and others. This was further supported in good measure by such poets as I. Nāji, Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Shābbi and I. Abū Shabakah and others writing in the Romantic tradition, Yūsuf Ghuṣūb and Sa'īd 'Aql and others writing in the Symbolist, as well as by such isolated experiments as that of Aḥmad al-Ṣāfi which brought the tone of poetry to a conversational level. This is to name but a few. The realm of emotion, moreover, was given great importance as early as the second decade and a sincere drive towards achieving a veracity of emotion was strengthened by the early adoption of Romantic poetic concepts. This adoption led to the insistence on a subjective poetry stemming from experience, and the externalised, often objective attitude of the neo-Classical poets was severely attacked. The greatest achievement gained in the realm of imagination was the successful incorporation of Nature into the inner experience of the poet, and some Mahjar poets even achieved a mystical fusion with Nature hitherto scarcely known in Arabic poetry. Imagination, therefore, was able to utilize nature for the interpretation of inner emotional experiences and profound abstract ideas, and the poet was no longer

satisfied with looking at nature merely as a source of external beauty, pleasing to the eye.* Moreover, Western poetry, encountered first-hand or through translations, was able to lend a dynamic influence to the use of imagery in poetry and the poetic imagination was greatly enriched, gaining not only in depth but also in kind and quality. The development of imagery in modern Arabic poetry deserves a specialised, detailed and much needed study, as do the changes effected in the poetic diction. In this work, the slow but steady achievement of the consecutive generations of poets in the realms of imagery and diction has been followed and emphasised wherever it was detected. But in a general work of this kind, intermitten observations on these themes cannot furnish the steady line of development which would be given by a specialised study. Arriving now at the fifties, the decade of the greatest poetic adventure in the history of Arabic poetry, the achievements in these two major poetic elements were so dynamic that they could never be completely described in a general work.

Although it is a sign of life and vitality that modern Arabic poetry in this century laid itself open to all kinds of poetic adventure, however, the steady change in poetry was not always easily achieved. Three points must be remembered here:

1. <u>The early schism in the poetic sensibility of the Arab people:</u> Despite the fact that the poetic field abounded with innovators and experimentalists, it also had many traditionalists whose fossilised creations were at times an added hindrance to the achievement of quick and decisive change. Every poetic epoch throughout the ages has had its train of conventionalists, but modern Arabic poetry had the peculiar situation of having borrowed its initial modern strength from Classical

* This should not mean that all former poetry in Arabic looked at nature merely as a source of external beauty, but reference here is to the majority of well-known examples. Writings on Arab treatment of nature in poetry do not seem completely satisfying or explorative and many poetic experiences were overlooked.

poetic experiments which, despite their permanent aesthetic value and the enduring freshness of many of them, often convey a Mediaeval spirit unsuited to the spirit of modern times, and artistic attitudes irreconcilable with contemporaneous poetic experience. The poetic renaissance was linked with revived feelings of pride in, and admiration for, the immense cultural heritage of the Arabs, and as this cultural heritage was attacked and criticised by some modernists such as Salāmah Mūsā, Mīkhā'īl Nu'aimah and other early avant-garde writers and thinkers in this century, the Classical citadel was jealously guarded by loyalists and men of letters reared exclusively in its tradition. Western influences were incompatible with major inherited attitudes and an early clash in the poetic sensibility took place. The passage of years and an accumulated modern poetic tradition modified, to some extent, this sensibility, so that the milder patterns, found unacceptable in the earlier decades, began to be accepted. However there was never any true or deep reconciliation between the traditionalists and the more splendid poetic achievements of this century. It can be said here, that although every poetry in the world experiences this customary clash between the traditionalists and the avant-garde pioneers, Arabic poetry in modern times experienced a more fierce battle than most, because of its peculiar circumstances. To the reasons given above which accounted for these experiences one may add that the fact (peculiar in itself too) that poetry is the most developed art of the Arabs and by far the most revered has deepened the protective, though often uninformed, jealousy with which it was guarded. The persistence of a strong traditional current in Arabic poetry, apart from the exhausting battle it created which hindered as much as stimulated avant-garde poetic creativity, meant that the great supply of very traditional poetry never failed. A literary historian, therefore, cannot overlook the fact that the literary field abounded with conventional and semi-conventional poetry side by side with avant-garde poetry of varying degrees of success and influence.

This was not diminished in the fifties but, on the contrary, the need felt in the fifties for committed poetry to be directed to a mass audience, renewed the popularity of such poetry which had waned a little in the short-lived Romantic period during the thirties and forties. The fifties, in fact, saw a revival of traditional poetry which makes of this most adventurous decade a period of particular interest to the critic. This will be discussed shortly.

2. The Clash between Theory and Practice: The second difficulty experienced by modern Arabic poetry before the fifties was the clash between the acquired artistic concepts of its various poets and critics and its own artistic possibilities. The first three or four decades of this century were characterised by the prevalence of theory over practice. The only poet-critic in the second decade who was able to match theory with practice was M. Nu'aimah. In the fourth decade Ilyās Abū Shabakah and Sa'īd 'Aql were able to achieve such a balance, to some extent. This was a sign of health and development. But most poets were not able to match their advanced poetic theories with equal poetic creations; the most drastic example of these was al-'Aqqād, especially in 'Ābir Sabīl, as has been demonstrated. But the steady development of Arabic poetry took on, in the forties, a subtle and quick growth, so that when the fifties arrived, the artistic needs of a more mature art of poetry were to dictate an experiment which was to take a whole decade to explain, and for which no full definition has yet been found. In its initial stage, the theories suggested to define and describe this experiment did not encompass its true artistic dimensions.

3. The Heritage of the Earlier Experiments: A very interesting observation presents itself as one tries to assess the outcome of the various experiments and experiences of modern Arabic poetry prior to the fifties. For it is seen that some successful experiments such as Romanticism yielded, at the end, several negative streaks, while other

unsuccessful ones such as the experiment of free verse of the type advocated by Aḥmad Zaki Abū Shādi mixing many metres within the same poem, might well have had some positive results.

To illustrate this one might suggest that the experiment of Fawzi al-Maʿlūf, despite its successful achievement of a poetry of high aesthetic value, may have perpetuated a trend in poetry towards the use of abstract imagery which was adopted by later poets of lesser poetic talent much to the detriment of the effectual use of images in poetry. A poet like ʿUmar al-Nuṣṣ, for example, used abstract imagery often in a most inartistic method, mixing what should have been of a most refined and rarified nature with images of the excessively repellent, as has been discussed.[1] Another more drastic example is the heritage of Romanticism. This important movement in modern Arabic poetry helped to strengthen the line of feeling and the realm of the imaginative to a considerable extent. Nevertheless, it developed quite early several decadent streaks: sentimentalism, verbosity, dilution, the excessive use of adjectives, emotional exhibitionism, and other such ailments, as has been discussed or alluded to in several places above. The achievement of Symbolism in Lebanon was a welcome check, and although it catered to an elite, it gave an excellent example in economy, concentration and subtlety. But it divorced itself from life and was far more introspective and uncommitted than the troubled times allowed in an Arab world full of contradictions and national strife. When the fifth decade arrived, both Romanticism and Symbolism had already produced all their drawbacks, and the poetry of the time seemed at the mercy of their more negative streaks. Although Abū Shabakah's later Romanticism was pure and healthy, it could not save the situation. Saʿīd ʿAql's concentration on the glorification of an Ideal Beauty considerably limited the extent of his experiment.

Other impediments in the field were the drawbacks of the neo-Classicisists the rhetorical devices, the self-assertive tone, the loud

exhibitionism, the stock phrases, words, images and emotions, the extreme externalisation of experience, and the repetitiveness of forms and attitudes.

.....

In the coming two chapters, the discussion will concentrate on general events, trends and developments in the poetic technique from 1947 on through the fifties and sixties. Individual poets will not be discussed separately as was the case with authors of the previous periods. We know to a sufficient degree the outcome of the work of the latter poets and the mark they left, good or bad, on the poets after them. But the achievement of individual poets of the current period cannot be assessed yet. They have not been writing long enough for any complete evaluation of their role and distinct influence. Moreover, with the exception of al-Sayyāb who died in 1964, they are still experimenting. Any attempt at a final judgment of them will not only be premature, but also deficient.

The interest of this work lies mainly in the evolution of Arabic poetry as an art form, and the emphasis is therefore on the development of the poetic technique before anything else. The examples in the following chapters are therefore taken from poets who experimented more or less vigorously, whether their experiments seem successful or otherwise. Poets from several Arab countries are mentioned such as the Iraqi Nāzik al-Malā'ikah (1923), Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb (1926), 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyāti (1926) and Buland al-Ḥaidari (1926); the Egyptian Muḥammad Muṣṭafa Badawi (1925), Aḥmad 'Abd al-Mu'ṭi Ḥijāzi (1935) and Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr (1931); the Palestinian Fadwā Ṭūqān (1918), Jabrā I. Jabrā (1920) and Tawfīq Ṣāyigh (1924); the Lebanese Yūsuf al-Khāl (1917) and Khalīl Ḥāwi (1924); and the Syrian Adūnīs (1930). An assessment of certain aspects of their experiments will be given without, however, making a complete evaluation of their individual roles.

SECTION 2: THE BEGINNING OF THE FREE VERSE MOVEMENT

(i) A Short Historical Background

If one were to define in simple words the free verse movement in modern Arabic poetry in its initial stage, one could say that it was a liberation from the fixed number of feet in a verse of poetry. This should include not only the liberation from the fixed number of feet in the traditional two hemistich form, but also in such other verse forms as the mukhammas,* the dubait,** the muwashshah,*** and all other variations introduced into Arabic poetry throughout its long history.

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* Al-mukhammas and with it al-musammat, al-muzdawij and al-rubā'i are really experiments in rhyme rather than in metre. The basic metrical unit in all these forms is the shatr which is always equal to one hemistich of the complete two-hemistich form. It is the arrangement of the rhymes which basically differentiates these forms from the two-hemistich form. The fact that some of them have an odd number of hemistichs such as five in al-mukhammas and a possible seven in al-musammat gives an added excitement to them but is not a deviation from the equilateral basis of these hemistichs. Al-mukhammas is made up of stanzas of five hemistichs each. Each of these stanzas either has an independent rhyme attached to each of the five hemistichs thus a a a a a; b b b b b; etc., or the last hemistichs of the stanzas might have the same rhyme thus a a a a b, c c c c b; etc.[2]

Al-musammat, according to Ibn Rashīq, should begin by two hemistichs sharing the same rhyme, then have four hemistichs in another rhyme, followed by a single hemistich in the rhyme of the first two, thus: aa bbbb a;[3] but there are other arrangements too. However, al-musammat repeats the same rhyme of the last hemistich throughout the whole poem, this rhyme being called 'amūd al-qasīdah.[4]

Al-Muzdawij is made up of hemistichs each two sharing a rhyme,[5] and al-rubā'iyyāt is made up of stanzas of four hemistichs whose rhyme arrangement may be aaaa; bbbb; cccc; etc., or abab; cdcd; etc.; but it can have other rhyme arrangements too in modern times such as aaaa; bbba; ccca; etc.[6] Modern Arabs have made great use of both al-muzdawij and al-rubā'iyyāt. One of the best examples is the volume of quartets written by the South Mahjar poet Ilyās Farḥāt, Rubā'iyyāt Farḥāt, Sao Paolo, 1945.

** The Dubait is a form of verse taken from Persian.[7] Anīs is right in refusing to regard this form of verse which employs a new arrangement of feet as a natural development of Arabic metre because of its Persian origin.[8] For, unlike the above-mentioned forms which are, in the arrangement of the feet within the hemistich, identical with the metrical arrangement of the two hemistich form, it has mainly the following metrical arrangement:

fa'lun mutafā'ilun fa'ūlun fa'ilun

اهوى رشأ حوى من الحسن فنون عيناه تقول للهوى كن فيكون 9

غنى فتمايل الندامى طربا لا شك هو النسيم والقوم غصون

Every stanza is made up of four hemistichs each of them ending in the same rhyme aaaa; bbbb; cccc; but other arrangements such as aaba; ccdc; eefe; etc. are also used.

*** The Muwashshah is a verse form which was invented in Andalusia at the end of the third century A.H. but flourished in the fifth.[10] From the many references, Classical and modern, which speak about this verse form its dependence on music is undoubted.[11] As a verse form it shows, in many of its examples, especially the earlier ones, great deviation of metre and composition. Poets often departed from the ʿarūḍ agreed upon by the savants of Arabic prosody, and often also mixed more than one metre in the same stanza. Several literary historians collected and thus preserved a number of muwashshahāt, but the first detailed study of these was made only at the end of the sixth century A.H. by the Egyptian poet and washshāḥ, Ibn Sanāʾ al-Mulk, in his famous Dār al-Ṭirāz fī ʿAmal al-Muwashshahāt. The basic system of the muwashshah is really simple to understand. The different Classical writers on the muwashshah are not all agreed on the terms applied to the different parts of the muwashshah. In this work the terms used in the E.I. will be adhered to for the sake of clarity. The muwashshah is made up of stanzas of identical pattern: in the metre or metres it employs, in the order of the verses and in that of the rhymes. A perfect muwashshah, that which Ibn Sanāʾ al-Mulk calls "al-tamm"[12] is made up first of a madhhab or overture described by the E.I. as a "sort of prelude to the actual poem". It is also called ghusn or matlaʿ. After this overture the proper muwashshah begins. According to the E.I. the greatest number of stanzas arrived at is seven stanzas. These stanzas are called djuzʾ or bait and are made up of two parts, the first part called simṭ or dawr and the second part called qaflah or qufl. Both the simṭ and the qufl can each have a varying number of hemistichs with varying or identical rhymes. The rhymes in the simṭ are never like those of the matlaʿ and are usually changed in every stanza; the rhymes in the qufl are identical with those of the matlaʿ and with all the other qufls. The last qufl of the muwashshah is called al-kharjah and was usually composed in the spoken language, often the Romance language spoken by natives of Andalusia at the time, but can be sometimes composed in the Classical language. Thus according to this description the muwashshah, in its more perfect form, i.e. al-tamm, would be composed after the following scheme: 1. matlaʿ: a b a b; bait or djuzʾ: (i) c d c, c d e for the simṭ or dawr and (ii) a b a b again for the qufl or qaflah and, in the last stanza kharjah. The next simṭ or dawr will have rhyme pattern equivalent to this: g h i, g h i; and the next j k l, j k l. However, the rhyme pattern, which can be even more elaborate than the above example is not the only adventurous change from the qasīdah. The unit in the muwashshah, like that in most of the other forms which deviated from the regular two hemistich monorhymed qasīdah, is the shaṭr and not the bait. In the better type of muwashshah the length of these shaṭrs can vary considerably, thus differing drastically from the basic rule of the Arabic qasīdah which is the great balance in the metrical formation of its hemistichs.[13] Another great difference is the possibility of deviating basically from the metres of Arabic poetry. Ibn Sanāʾ al-Mulk, the Egyptian poet and washshāḥ, who died in 608 A.H., in his definition of al-muwashshah aptly described the metrical basis of this art form as follows: "The muwashshahāt are divided into two classes: I. The first is composed according to Arabic metres; the second has no connection with them. The first class is again divided into two subdivisions: i. perfect poetry... this kind is bad and is to be rejected. It is more like mukhammasāt and is only composed by the weaker poets and by those who want to imitate that which they do not know ... ii. The second is that in which a vowel or word is repeated throughout in such a way that it ceases to be pure poetry .. II. Those of the second class of muwashshahāt have nothing to do with the metres of the Arabs. These are the innumerable majority which cannot be contained [within a list]. I would have liked to record for them a metrical system which would be the right measure for their [structure]...

but that proved impossible, for they have no 'arūd except the melody, and no darb except the rhythm, and no watad except the keys that bind the strings ... "[14]

Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk then proceeds to enumerate the irregular types of muwashshahāt. Among these he mentions those muwashshahāt whose qufls differ in metre from their simts.[15] This might prompt the modern critic to think that Abū Shādi's unsuccessful experiment of using more than one metre in the same poem was precedented by the Andalusian muwashshah. However, one must keep in mind the difference between the basic nature of the two experiments. For the mixed muwashshahāt were successful and, according to Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk, were superior patterns whose dependence on music and tune is clear from this savant's comments on them.[16] Abū Shādi's experiment had no connection with music and singing. The success of the mixed metres of the muwashshah stemmed from their correct application to their music, and not from a true harmony between the different metrical construction of the qufls and the simts if judged from a purely prosodical point of view, as would be done with Abū Shādi's experiment.

The muwashshahāt which are now based on the metres of the Arabs are further divided by him into two kinds: 1. Those "which have a verse measure which the ear can grasp and good taste recognise as one recognises the verse measures of poetry, without needing to test them according to the metrical system";[17] and 2. Those "which have a confused verse measure, the structure being weak 'muhalhal al-nasj' and the composition disturbed 'mufakkak al-nazm'".[18] In his view the reader of these patterns is unable to discover whether the poem is metrically sound or defective, and again, referring to the dependence on music, he re-asserts that such patterns "can only be understood by those who have knowledge of this art" for it can only be discerned by the "measure of melody."[19] It is relevant here to give an example of this kind of muwashshah:

matla' [20]

انـــت اشراحـــي لا قرب الله اللواحـــي

– – ᴗ – – /– ᴗ – – – – ᴗ – –

simt: خضعت في هواك وما كنت لاخضـع من شاء ان يقول فاني لست اسمع

– – ᴗ ᴗ /– – ᴗ ᴗ/– ᴗ – ᴗ/– ᴗ – – ᴗ –/– – ᴗ ᴗ/– ᴗ – ᴗ/– –

حسبي على رضاك شفيـع لي مشفّع

– – ᴗ –/– – ᴗ ᴗ/– ᴗ – ᴗ/– –

qufl: بين ارتياع وارتيـــاح نشـوان صاحـــي

– – ᴗ – –/– ᴗ – – – – ᴗ – –

Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's disinclination to try to solve the problem of these strange metres seems to have a very good reason, for he considered that the secret of their rhythmical system lay in the melodies of the tunes they were meant to fill. He does not say this in such precise terms, but the fact that these are songs written to fit already existing musical structures is easily surmised from his constant insistence on testing these verse measures according to the melody "at the time of singing them".[21] "What the melody is incapable of accepting" is found to be faulty and the writer is "scandalised".[22]

The idea that the existing structures which these songs were meant to fit incorporated foreign tunes sung in Spain, probably by the indigenous Spanish population, has been discussed by some recent writers.[23] The

strangeness of some of the metres of these muwashshahāt,[24] the use of the Romance language often in the kharjah,[25] and the fact that these songs began as popular creations, makes the idea very plausible. However, we cannot go into this here, for the solution of what one might call the metrical enigma of these muwashshahāt has been sought by many writers and scholars, Arab and foreign, and the background of the study has become rather lengthy and complicated, entailing many long arguments. A full discussion of it would be beyond the scope of this work.

What is relevant here for the sake of drawing a fair comparison with free verse in modern Arabic poetry, is to remember two things. Firstly that the muwashshahāt were written to fit existing musical forms. Secondly that in their more adventurous forms, they often used units (ashtār) of unequal lengths, but these, in both the number and nature of their feet as well as in their rhyme endings, had to conform to a pre-defined pattern in which they had to be contained.

A last point must deal with the subject matter of the muwashshah. At the beginning these songs were mostly songs of love and wine as well as of nature in which the prettier physical aspects of scenery were described. Then other subjects, more linked with formal poetry were introduced such as eulogy, elegy, satire, as well as such themes which are basically unsuited to light songs like ascetic and religious themes. The ascetic one is called "al-mukaffir", (from "kaffara" :to atone).[26] However, these last kinds are the less famous ones. The muwashshahāt which deal with love, wine and nature are more famous and interesting and an atmosphere of playfulness and lightheartedness dominates them, although some of them can convey a wistful emotion typical to love poetry in Arabic.[27]

(ii) Experiments in Form prior to 1947

In the course of this work, the experiments in form have been examined which took place during the periods or at the hands of the authors discussed so far. These ranged from some of the attempts of Mahjar and other poets in effecting stanzaic variations on the form of the qasīdah, to the attempts of writing blank verse "shi'r mursal" by poets like al-Zahāwi, A. Shukri and Aḥmad Zaki Abū Shādi, to the attempts by the latter of writing free verse which mixed several metres in the same poem. After that, several other attempts were made in the poetic form prior to the formal beginning of the movement of free verse in 1947. It would help to form a continuous picture of the evolution of the poetic form in modern Arabic poetry if all these experiments prior to 1947 were discussed and compared here, those already examined being re-assessed only briefly.

I. The first are the successful experiments which introduced minor variations on the form of the qaṣīdah such as using shorter metres, the couplet, the quartet and other stanzaic forms some of which were imitations of the forms of the muwashshah. The latter type imitated mostly the simpler forms of al-muwashshah but did not always adhere to its basic rules. The revival of the art of muwashshah in this century led to the composition of poems with identical stanzas, with or without refrain, but with a more modernised spirit, diction and imagery. Several poets in both North and South Mahjar experimented on this, among whom Nasīb 'Arīḍah in the North and Ilyās Farḥāt in the South are as good as any. 'Aridah's following poem is famous and has been often mistakenly regarded as an early example of free verse:

3	كفنـــوه وادفنـــوه واسكتـــوه	28
2	هـوة اللحد العميق	
2	وادهبـوالا تنـدبـوه	
3	* فهو شعـب ميـت ليـس يفيـق	

* Written in this style to show the basic regularity of its form; however, it could be written differently, the first line made into three of one foot each. The numbers on the left hand side denote the number of feet in each line.

This is a simple adventure in the ramal metre which has the fluidity and serious tone of free verse, but which repeats the same pattern in the following stanza. Farḥāt in his early poetry gives a limited but representative variety of these experiments.[29] Such experiments are called by A.K. al-Maqdisi "al-tawshīh al-'asri",[30] which he rightly regards as having been influenced, not only by the Classical muwashshah, but also by examples from Western poetry.[31] Other poets in the Arab East also experimented in these forms and a large variety of poems were composed which may or may not adhere to the pattern of the muwashshah, but which agrees with it in its fundamental aspect, namely the recurrence of pattern from one stanza to another.[32] It must be remembered that these patterns, although sometimes giving the appearance of being free, are not a free form of poetry, because the poet has to conform in all his stanzas to the length of the different metrical units which he decides in his first stanza, as well as to the rhyme arrangement.[33] At this point, however, the following question imposes itself with increasing persistence: would a complex stanza be regarded as free if it stood alone, i.e. if the poet did not repeat its particular order in another stanza? The answer is probably no, although the explanation of the reasons might be rather elusive. However, a tentative answer would be that the divisions of the parts of stanzaic verse which follows fixed patterns stand in a more decorative order. "The stature of the whole", to quote G. Rylands, "requires and can set off the richest ornaments."[34] They have no enjambments, as a rule, and have very definite caesuras at the ends, locked by rhymes, thus producing the effect of a tightly organised structure. The words form themselves into units and are composed as well-defined groups, fitted within the strict boundaries of the stanza, and one feels that the creativity of the poet comes out in short spurts which order themselves within the closure of stanzaic lines. Moreover, the parts of a stanza, i.e. the shaṭrs, are

never longer than a verse of the usual two hemistich form, a hemistich, or part of a hemistich. This form has its advantages and its usefulness,[35] but it differs basically from free verse.

II. The second category was the more adventurous and pragmatic experiments which involved, not only the omission of rhyme in what came to be known as "al-shi'r al-mursal", but also the metrical structure of the poem.

It has been shown how al-Zahāwi in 1905 tried the first experiment in blank verse in this century, and how a few years later 'Abd al-Raḥmān Shukri repeated the experiment, writing several poems in shi'r mursal which he published in several of his diwans in the second decade. Both poets omitted the rhymes but kept diligently to the two hemistich form. Abū Shādi, who rose to fame in the twenties, used blank verse both in poems of two hemistichs which kept to one metre only, and in those poems in which he experimented with metres mixing several of them in one poem and calling them free verse. Muḥammad Farīd Abū Ḥadīd, a less famous poet-experimentalist, was experimenting at the same time with blank verse. He wrote a play in blank verse probably in 1918[36] entitled Maqtal Sayyidunā 'Uthmān which he published in 1927. The play met with no success on either the dramatic or the poetic levels, but despite that, he published other works in blank verse. Another experimentalist was the Ḥaḍrami poet 'Ali Aḥmad Bākathīr whose experiments in poetry went further than simple blank verse as will presently be discussed. The experiments in blank verse which kept to the two hemistich form failed drastically.* It has been discussed above how the rhyme seems to be a necessary adjunct to the two hemistich form because this form is too clearly defined and qualified to allow for rhymeless ends. Firstly, every verse is capable of being independent of the following verse so that the rhyme remains the only technical link

* Those of Abū Shādi's type of free verse also did, but primarily because the whole experiment failed.

between the verses, a recurring note which binds the music and gives strength to the rhythm. Secondly, the caesura in the two hemistich form is obligatory at the end of verses and is generally applied at the end of the first hemistich (al-sadr), except when tadwīr (enjambment) has been used. Such strict divisions of equal rhythmical units in poetry seem to require a rhyme. When a symmetrical pattern is established, then, at the moment it repeats itself, the mind anticipates an identical creation. The more a thing is regimented, the more it must be perfectly regimented in all its aspects; and the rhyme, ringing with the caesura at the end of the verses brings the symmetrical pattern to completion. The function of the rhyme is proven here to be, as Abercrombe asserts, "primarily structural".[37] This condition applies also to stanzaic forms where the different shatrs which compose the stanza have predefined lengths and obligatory caesuras. Rhymes in these stanzaic forms are more varied but they still seem necessary to link together the lines of the stanza. This is an interesting technical point which should be probed into in greater detail in a more specialised study.[38]

Another adventurous experiment which also met with no success was that called "free verse" by Aḥmad Zaki Abū Shādi. This was introduced by him in the twenties and was imitated by a few others. It aimed at mixing several metres in the same poem, but did so indiscriminately, so that there was no authentic rhythmical structure in the poems and the aesthetic aspect of rhythm was drastically damaged in most of these examples. But it had one positive feature, for it did not adhere to a fixed number of feet in each verse of poetry and the caesuras were not so rigidly pre-fixed. The advantage of this was easily proven when a poet happened to persist, probably quite unconsciously, in writing a few consecutive lines in the same metre; for then a piece of free verse of the modern type sometimes resulted. This was the case in a poem by the Lebanese poet Khalīl

Shaybūb entitled "Al-Shirā'" mentioned above which he published in 1932.

A perfectly good stanza in the modern free verse resulted:

4*	ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ	هدأ البحر رحيبا يملأ العين جلا لا	39
4	ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ	وصفا الأفق ومالت شمسه ترنو دلالا	
2	ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ	وبدا فيه شراع	
3	ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ	كخيال من بعيد يتمشى	
3	ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ	في بساط نائج من نسج عشب	
3	ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ	او حمام لم يجد في الروض عشا	
2	ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ	فهو في خوف ورعب	

But Iraqi periodicals have been publishing avant-garde poetic pieces ever since the twenties. In his book Fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi 'l-Hadīth Y. 'Izziddīn collected several early examples of these. The earliest among them** in shi'r hurr, (where a poem sticks only to one metre and irregularly varies the number of feet from line to line) is one written by the Lebanese poet Nuqūlā Fayyāḍ as early as 1924. A brief example is the following:

3	ـ ـ / ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ	ان اكن احببت حبا خالصا	40
2	ـ ـ / ـــ ـ	فلقد احببت فتاك	
4	ـ ـ / ـ ـ / ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ	*** ان اكن احببت حبا مؤلما ـ فلهما	
1	ـــ ـ	مقلتـــاك	

* Numbers denote the number of feet in each line. Prosodical signs always read from right to left unless otherwise stated.

** Most of the examples given by Y. 'Izziddīn are in shi'r manthūr. These include the poem related to al-Rasafi. Pieces in metre number fifteen among which only four seem to be free. The earliest is Fayyāḍ's, quoted above, followed by Abū Salma's (1926), Anwar Shā'ūl's (1929) and Madhat's (1930). All four are in ramal. The example from S. Fadli (1925) is in shi'r mursal which keeps to the two hemistich form, omitting the rhyme endings. The example from B.N. (1921) is in broken ramal and must be dismissed. The example from I.'A. al-Māzini (1342 A.H. /1923?/), in ramal, adheres to a regular stanzaic pattern. So do the two poems in ramal by B. Dhuwaib, (1925 & 1929) which imitate N. 'Arīḍah's famous poem discussed above. An example from Samīr al-Kawākib /pseudonym?/ (1925) in ramal also conforms to a pattern; and so do those by Mīr Baṣri (1934) in ramal, and Ilyās Abū Shabakah (1938). The example from K. Sālih (1930) has mixed metres and so has the one from Ṭ. 'A. al-Hāfiz, /1937?/. A. al-Qaraghūli's piece is an imitation of the famous muwashshah by Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk: كللي يا سحب تيجان الرياسي بالحلـــي It is interesting to notice how al-ramal dominates these innovations, a reminder of the probable influence of the Iraqi band as well as of 'Arīḍah's poem in ramal. Al-band will be discussed presently. Y. 'Izziddīn does not bring out the distinction between these various forms, but tends to mix between the terms in a way confusing to the lay reader.[41]

*** The third foot is incomplete, the last foot forming a unit by itself.

the free verse

This method was also adopted by 'Ali Aḥmad Bākathīr, a poet from Ḥadramout, in his translation of Romeo and Juliet. In this translation, he used several metres and based his composition, as he said in his introduction, not on the unity of the verse but on the complete sentence whose meaning can extend over two, three or more verses so that the reader can read on without stopping until the meaning of the sentence is exhausted. The poet adds here that his composition is also free because it is not committed to a predefined number of feet.[42] All this is very attractive in theory, as it is stated by the poet. But, the sudden change from one metre to another does not help the flow of meaning and is a worse encumbrance to fluency and the essential harmony between form and content. However, Bākathīr improved on this method later on. Although this play was published in 1946, the author asserts that it was written in 1936. The poetry he published in 1943 shows that he had rejected the unsuccessful mixing of several metres in the same poem or play, for he stuck to one metre in a drama he wrote entitled Al-Samā' wa Akhnātūn wa Nefertītī, varying the number of feet 'tafā'īl' from one line to another. The same technique was used by him in a poem published in the same year in Al-Risālah under the heading "Namūdhaj min al-Shi'r al-Mursal al-Ḥurr". However, his use of the word "mursal" here is strange, because the poem does employ rhymes:

5*	-ᴗ- /-ᴗ- /-- /-ᴗ- /-ᴗᴗ	43 عجبا كيف لم تصف بالدنى زلزلة
5	-ᴗ- /-ᴗᴗ /-ᴗ- /-ᴗ- /-ᴗ-	كيف لم تهو فوق الورى شهب مرسلة
2	-ᴗ- /-ᴗ-	يا لها مهزلة
3	-ᴗ- /-ᴗ- /-ᴗ-	يا لها سوأة مخجلة

This is directly in free verse in al-khabab metre, of the kind of free verse employed in the fifties. In certain passages in this poem as well

* Numbers denote the number of feet in each line.

as in his play Akhnātūn, Bākathīr arrives at a poetic expression very near to the language of conversation:

44 وروت صحف الدنيا يوما هذا النبأ التالي 7 *-- /-∪∪ /-- /-- /-- /-∪∪ /-∪∪

ابلت في "بئر حكيم" جنود فرنسا بلاءً كبيرا 7 --∪- /-∪- /-∪∪ /-∪- /-∪∪ /--/--

صدت (النازى) فارتدّ كسيرا حسيرا 5 --∪- /-∪∪ /-- /-- /-∪-

قالت الدنيا: يا بطولتها، يا شجاعتها 6 -∪∪ /-∪- /-∪∪ /-∪- /-- /-∪-

However, this apparent 'suffocation' of the music in verse, a technique which, when manoeuvred by a great poet, might be highly effective in dramatic poetry, did not please a contemporary of Bākathīr, a poet called Ḥusain al-Ghannām, who wrote in a following number of Al-Risālah saying that this poem was neither 'mursal' nor 'hurr' because "it had no music".[45] For him, "al-nazm al-mursal" and "al-nazm al-hurr" are two different things. However, he does not volunteer to explain them but goes on to say that poets misunderstood the idea of free verse even when trying to preserve the original music of the metres. He is referring here to the kind of verse which mixed in the same poem several kinds of metres, varying them suddenly and frequently. Ghannām here attacks the lack of harmony in this kind of verse and calls for a kind of verse which employs metres nearer to each other so that some sort of harmony is achieved.[46] He then gives as an example of his own poetry a verse translation of a poem by Longfellow which he describes as "written in shi'r mursal", a strange term here for the poem does employ rhyme. Ghannām apparently was just like so many others at his time and after, who mixed up the different terms, either by mistake or intent, if they considered that a certain term better fitted what they had in mind. The poem in question is entitled "Ughniyat Hayawāna" and employs the main feet of the wāfir metre, mufā'alatun -∪--, varying the number of feet from one verse to another and doing away with the fixed caesura. However, unlike that of Bākathīr, he used in this poem only half verses or traditionally used parts of verses, i.e. "ashtār" and "ajzā'" which is a

* Numbers denote the number of feet in each line.

limited freedom indeed. Bākathīr used unusual numbers of feet in some of his lines, such as seven feet, as is shown in the examples above. Ghannām's poem goes on as follows:

4 * ---ᴗ /-ᴗᴗ-ᴗ /---ᴗ /---ᴗ	من الغابات والروضات جئت بكل اخباري	47
4 ---ᴗ /---ᴗ /---ᴗ /---ᴗ	وليس السامع المروى مثل الناظر الساري	
2 ---ᴗ /---ᴗ	فمن غاب ومن سهل	
2 ---ᴗ /---ᴗ	ومن نهر ومن تل	
4 ---ᴗ /-ᴗᴗ-ᴗ /-ᴗᴗ-ᴗ /---ᴗ	ومن ارض يعيش بها قبائل اهل (اوجيب)	
4 ---ᴗ /---ᴗ /---ᴗ /---ᴗ	و(دانوتاه) في ارض خلت للشاة والذيب	

Despite the poet's dependence on half verses or on traditional parts of verses, the absence of the caesura, the absence of predefined pattern from the poem do prefigure the later and freer free verse in Arabic. But the main difference in these experiments of Ghannām and Bākathīr and those of the later free verse movement is the fact that they are immature and lack in other poetic values. Neither Ghannām nor Bākathīr are talented poets and despite the well-guided intuition in experimentation and their arrival at the preliminary answer to the secret of freedom in the form of the Arabic qaṣīdah (i.e. the variation of the number of feet between one line of poetry and another, provided this variation does away with the prefixed caesura and does not follow a predefined pattern) they were not able to produce good examples of free verse which could impose it as a new form on Arab poets.

These various experiments in form prior to 1947 are unknown to most readers and even to many writers on poetry in the contemporary Arab world. But the more closely these pre-1947 experiments are examined, the more clearly one sees the steady line of evolution of this form during the first half of the century. For although the experiments of Ghannām and Bākathīr seemed rather raw and undeveloped, a Lebanese poet, Fu'ād al-Khashin, was able to write a poem in a more developed form of free verse. This was

* Numbers denote the number of feet in each line.

his poem "Ana Lawlāki" which he published in 1946. It was written in al-ramal metre in which the foot of fā'ilātun is the unit:

4 *–⏑⏑/–⏑⏑/–⏑⏑/–⏑⏑	انا لولاك لما كنت ولا كان غنائـــي	48
3 –⏑⏑–/–⏑⏑/–⏑⏑–	يرقص الكون على لحن السناء	
5 o–⏑⏑/–⏑⏑/–⏑⏑/–⏑⏑/–⏑⏑–	انا لولاك لما كنت على الارض سوى ظـل فنـــاء	
3 o–⏑⏑/–⏑⏑–/–⏑⏑	يتمطى تحـت قبلات ذكـاء°	
2 o–⏑⏑–/–⏑⏑	فاذا جاء المســاء°	
2 o–⏑⏑/–⏑⏑	يتوارى ويـــذا ب°	
1 o–⏑–	باضطـراب°	
2 o–⏑–/–⏑––	خفقـــه خفـق السراب°	
3 o–⏑–/–⏑–/–⏑⏑	يتلاشـــى فوق سمراء الرمال°	
3 –⏑⏑/–⏑⏑/–⏑––	انت حولت غنائي ازلا	
3 –⏑⏑/–⏑⏑/ –⏑⏑	وسكبت فوق يأسي املا	
3 o–⏑⏑/–⏑⏑/–⏑––	انت فتحت عيوني فرأيت°	
1 o–⏑–	واهتديـت°.	

The number of feet here ranges from one to five to the line. This is achieved smoothly and harmoniously and is well in anticipation of the later and more famous experiments in free verse. If the subject matter and the attitude of this poem are still in the tradition of Romantic ghazal, it remains, as a prosodical experiment, a very successful one, and until further research proves otherwise, this poem might well be termed the first successful poem in free verse in modern Arabic. Fu'ād al-Khashin belongs to a younger generation of Mahjar poets. One can therefore hardly attribute his experiment merely to the tradition of experimentation in form which the Mahjar poets of the earlier generation, that of Farḥāt, Nu'aimah, 'Arīḍah and others had acquired, for this tradition had already become in the forties a legacy from which all modern Arab poets might benefit. In fact, al-Khashin himself denies any direct influence on him by other poets.

* Numbers denote number of feet in each line.

In a letter to the present writer he says:[49] توصلت الى هذه الطريقة بفطرتي الشعرية ولا اذكر انني تأثرت بشاعر معين سبقني الى ذلك "

He seems to have acquired a conscious interest in experimentation in form, for he says in the same letter that he had started experimenting in 1944 and wrote a poem in two metres which he did not publish. One can surmise however, that his experimentation was a result of the sustained series of experimentation in form during the previous decades. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, who asserts that she was the first to write free verse in Arabic, does not mention al-Khashin's above quoted poem in any of her writings, although she had begun contributing to Al-Adīb magazine around that date. However, it may be that she missed it in her readings.

This experiment, together with that of Bākathīr's Romeo and Juliet, was done in metres which are formed by the regular repetition of one foot. These are called "al-buḥūr al-mufradah" * as opposed to "al-buḥūr al-murakkabah" which are formed from the regular repetition of more than one foot in one metre.

As early as 1946 also an Egyptian poet made a single attempt at freeing a compound metre which, although tentative, shows the seeds of a later sophistication which appeared in the poetry he wrote in the fifties. This is Muḥammad Muṣṭafa Badawi in his poem "Baqāyā Qaṣīdah".[51] In this poem of four stanzas he tried in the third and fourth stanzas to experiment

* These are al-mutaqārab, which is based on the foot fa'ūlun; al-kāmil, which is based on mutafā'ilun, al-rajaz, which is based on mustaf'ilun; al-mutadārak, which is based on fā'ilun (and from which al-khabab, based on fa'lun or fa'ilun is derived); al-ramal, based on fā'ilātūn; and al-hazaj based on mafā'īlun. More will be said on these metres shortly. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah called these metres "al-buḥūr al-ṣāfiyah" a term which does not seem adequate because of the connotations of the word "pure" "ṣāfi" with regards to "pure poetry", "al-shi'r al-ṣāfi", a term much used by Sa'īd 'Aql after Abbe Bremond's and Paul Valery's great use of the term "poesie pure" in French, as has been mentioned in the chapter on Symbolism. The term "al-buḥūr al-mufradāt" is known in Classical Arabic; it was given by the famous al-Jawhari, author of Al-Ṣiḥāḥ lexicon. He also gave the term "al-buḥūr al-murakkabāt" to those metres in Arabic poetry which employ two different feet. Al-Malā'ikah called the latter "al-buḥūr al-mamzūjah".[50]

with al-khafīf metre and succeeded in the third in achieving marked and unorthodox variations in this metre:

52 في نعيب المداخن الحمراء — – – –/ – ∪ – ∪/ – – ∪ –
حاذرونا . — – – ∪ –
بين كون عفا مع الزمن العاشر يوما — – – ∪ ∪/ – – ∪ ∪/ – ∪ – ∪/ – – ∪ –
وآخر لن يكونا — – – ∪ –/ – ∪ – ∪
آه لسنا سوى قطيع من الاشباح دثرن بالسبات سنينا — – – ∪ ∪/ – ∪ – ∪/ – – ∪ –/ – – ∪ –/ – ∪ – ∪/ – – ∪ –
وتخبطن في ظلام الليالي — – – ∪ –/ – ∪ – ∪/ – – ∪ –
تائهينا . — – – ∪ –
نحن هذى الاشياء ... نحن الخفافيش — – – ∪ –/ – ∪ – –/ – – ∪ –
يا الهي . . . — – – ∪ –
يا اله الموتى — – –/ – – ∪ –
يا اله الموتى الهوام على الارض الا ابك لنا لأنا عمينا — – – ∪ –/ – ∪ – ∪/ ∪ – ∪ ∪/ / – – ∪ ∪/ – ∪ – –/ – – ∪ –

The khafīf metre: fā'ilātun mustaf'ilun fa'ilātun is surely one of the most fascinating compound metres to experiment with, for it lends itself to several variations making smooth use of enjambment tadwīr between the two hemistichs and thus getting easily rid of the caesura in the middle of the verse.[53] It also yields to a rather free repetition of the first foot fā'ilātun as well as other feet used in al-rajaz and al-ramal metres whose basic feet form al-khafīf (being mustaf'ilun for al-rajaz and fā'ilātun for al-ramal). Thus feet such as fā'ilun, fa'lun and fa'ilun used as last feet in al-ramal, as well as feet such as maf'ūlun used occasionally as the last foot in al-rajaz can also be employed. In the above example maf'ūlun ends the first line and fa'lun ends the tenth.

Another conscious, if brief, attempt at free verse of the modern type was attempted by Luwīs 'Awaḍ in a collection published in Cairo in 1947 under the title of Blutoland wa Qaṣā'id Ukhrā and suppressed in the same year because of its revolutionary attitude as expressed in the author's dissident introduction[54] and in some of his experimental verse.

Some of 'Awad's experiments were in the vernacular. An attempt at freeing the Arabic verse from the predetermined number of feet shows itself in the following extract from his poem "Kiryālisūn" in al-rajaz metre:

1 * ابـي ابـي 55

2 احـــزان هذا الكوكـــب

2 ناء بها قلـــبي الصبـــي

.....

3 الرزء تحت الرزء في صدري خبي

But this rather minor attempt did not become known in the literary circles outside Egypt, as far as one can surmise from events which took place later on. However, its vitality lies in the fact that 'Awad, simultaneously with so many other minor and major poets of the time, stumbled on the secret of freedom in the Arabic metres. This is no mere coincidence. These poets were not rummaging in a blind alley. On the one hand, the form of Arabic poetry, through decades of experimentation had been made flexible enough to allow its richest potential to yield itself readily to new experiments. On the other hand, the accumulated influence of decades of readings in and translations from Western poetry were now yielding ripe fruit.

These were the major experiments in form prior to 1947. However, an art form which had been practised in Iraq for the last three centuries merits discussion here before the examination of the free verse movement can be attempted.

Al-Band: It was probably in the eleventh century A.H.,[56] i.e. some three hundred years ago, that a new art form came to be written in Iraq. This was al-band whose origins and purpose are not yet clearly defined.[57] Most writers on al-band seem to regard it as a poetic form,[58] whereas al-Zahāwi regarded it as a form intermediate between poetry and prose,[59]

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* Numbers denote the number of feet in each line.

a conclusion arrived at also by ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Duajili in his book on this art form.[60] Al-Dujaili, however, shows a rather hazy attitude towards this when he says that al-band constitutes a liberation from the poetic shackles of the traditional form (ʿamūd),[61] thus suggesting that it is a poetic form. Before any further explanation is attempted, a description of al-band is necessary.

Al-Dujaili has collected quite a representative number of bands which were written in Iraq between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries A.H.[62] From a study of these bands some idea of the artistic value and probably of the purpose of these bands might be formed, although no final picture can be drawn without a more detailed study being made of these bands and of the various writings on them. Such a study, however, is not possible here not only because of the length of time involved in such a specialised venture,[63] but also because the majority of these bands have been preserved either by means of oral transmission,[64] or in manuscripts preserved in private libraries in Iraq,[65] especially in al-Najaf,[66] and probably also outside of Iraq in such places as al-Ahwāz, al-Muḥammarah and al-Baḥrain.[67]

However, the bands available to us in al-Dujaili's collection are sufficient to help us form a preliminary concept of the band as an art form and one might begin by asserting that there is no connection between these bands and music, despite the rhythmical flow of their composition. They are metrical structures which employ continuously changing rhymes and only two metres of the sixteen metres of Arabic prosody, al-ramal and al-hazaj. Each of these metres is employed either exclusively in a single band, or a band might be formed by a mixture of the two metres. Al-ramal and al-hazaj are two of the six metres in Arabic poetry called al-buḥūr al-mufradāt or al-mufradah, which are based on the repetition of the same foot (tafʿīlah) throughout the poem. In the band the author

does not commit himself to a pre-defined number of feet (tafā'īl) as in the traditional metres of the two hemistich form, or in other Classical verse forms such as al-muwashshah, but gives himself the freedom to vary the number of these feet between each unit. The traditional, pre-determined caesura is also absent, for in a band the author seems to yield only to the demand of meaning and rhyme to end his metrical units. He is primarily guided by his meaning, but as rhymes seem essential at the end of most units, the necessity to repeat a particular rhyme might force the author to elongate his sentences, just as in rhymed prose, and thus cause over-padding and inflation. This is more so because the authors of bands have not been particularly noted for eminence or creativity,[68] and are therefore less capable of manoeuvring their creations with full artistic vigour, instinctively avoiding too much bombast and turgidity. In some bands the units seem to overlap greatly, using enjambment, "tadwīr", over rhyme ends and sometimes causing great injury to the rhyme ends by forcing a vowel ending on one rhyme different from that of the previous, otherwise matching, rhyme. Bands, it is interesting to note, were written in the same form as prose, i.e. in paragraphs and not in separate lines for each unit, as in the case of poetry.

Al-band has been recently studied by Nāzik al-Malā'ikah,[69] Muṣṭafa Jamāl al-Dīn[70] and others with a view to comparing it with free verse in contemporary Arabic poetry. The studies already made by the first two writers, whose contribution in this field is of great value, and by several other writers and commentators,[71] make it imperative for a writer on free verse to discuss this art form at greater length and try to see the true connection, if any, between it and free verse, in view of the contrasting opinions writers on this art form have had.

It is necessary here to illustrate with some extracts of more representative bands. An example of a band written in the twelfth century A.H. by Naṣr Allah al-Ḥā'iri (d.1156 A.H.) is the following written

in al-hazaj metre with very little enjambment. It is a band al-Ḥā'iri wrote in correspondence with a dignitary of his times:*

72	سلا ما ما شذا الزهـر °	مفاعيلن مفاعيـل °	2 **
	وما باثره القطـر °	مفاعيلُ مفاعيـــل °	2
	ولا العود على الجمر °	مفاعيلُ مفاعيـــل °	2
	ولا نغمته الضربة النفس °	مفاعيلُ مفاعيـــلُ مفاعيل °	3
	ولا العقد من الدر °	مفاعيلُ مفاعيل °	2
	على جيد مها الانس °	مفاعيلُ مفاعيل °	2
	ولا زهر نجوم الافق مذ فارقها البدر °	مفاعيلُ مفاعيلُ مفاعيلُ مفاعيل °	4
	ولا وشي الطواويس ولا الخمر °	مفاعيلن مفاعيلُ مفاعيل °	3
	وقد ناولها الساقي بكأس يشبه النجم °	مفاعيلُ مفاعيلن مفاعيلن مفاعيل °	4
	ولا الوصـل °	مفاعيـل °	1
	وقد جاد به الحب بحيد القطع والهجر °	مفاعيلُ مفاعيلُ مفاعيلن مفاعيل °	4
	ولا مبسمه الاشنب وهو اللؤلؤ الرطب °	مفاعيلُ مفاعيلُ مفاعيلن مفاعيل °	
	ولا ريق المذا رى العذب ابهى من تحيات نطاق الحصر عنها ضاق تُهدى للفتى الندب °		
8	مفاعيلن مفاعيلن مفاعيلن مفاعيلن مفاعيلن مفاعيلن مفاعيلـن مفاعيـــل °		
5	عليٍّ ذى السجايا الغر مَنْ أقلامه تنفث بالسحر °	مفاعيلن مفاعيلن مفاعيلن مفاعيلُ مفاعيل °	
3	وتُبدى الانجم الزهر بليل النقس	مفاعيلن مفاعيلُ مفاعيلن مَ	
2	في افق سما الطرس °	فاعيلُ مفاعيـل °	
4	وتجلو الزهر في الاوراق مهما امطرت حبرا	مفاعيلن مفاعيلن مفاعيلن مفاعيلن	

The sukūn at the end of the rhyme words is arbitrary, for their vocalization does not interfere with the metre. What happens then is that mafā'īl becomes mafā'īlun, retaining the full foot of al-hazaj. However, this will bring out the difference in the various cases of the rhyme words, for if "al-durri" is in the genative, "al-badru" is in the nominative.

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* Written here in lines as the modern free verse for the sake of obtaining an immediately clear picture of its metrical formation.

** Numbers denote the number of feet in each line.

In this piece the divergence in the number of feet is very adventurous, varying from one to eight. Bands in purely ramal metre also exist. ʿAli Bālīl who may have lived and died in the twelfth century, if not earlier,[73] seems to have deliberately written bands in al-ramal, for in one of his bands he alludes to this.[74] However, he has bands which are in pure hazaj,[75] and others which meander between the two metres.[76] An example of a band by him in ramal is the following:

77

8 * كم سطا يقوى على الانفس والقوة للخالق منه بضعيفين عتوا واقتدارا

– – ᴗ –/– – ᴗ ᴗ/– – ᴗ ᴗ/– – ᴗ ᴗ/– – ᴗ ᴗ/– – ᴗ ᴗ/– – ᴗ –/– – ᴗ –

9 وأكتفينا بالضعيفين عن الذكر بصلومية الالحاظ والخصر بمعنى الضعف والقوة فكرا

––ᴗᴗ /––ᴗ– /––ᴗᴗ /––ᴗ– /––ᴗ– /––ᴗᴗ /––ᴗᴗ /––ᴗ– /––ᴗ–

4 ورنا يهزأ بالظبي وعينيه بنجلا

– – ᴗ –/– – ᴗ ᴗ/– – ᴗ ᴗ/– – ᴗ ᴗ

2 تبعث الميّت حيا

– – ᴗ ᴗ/– – ᴗ –

6 لم تزل في حالة الصحوة بين المرغ اللازم والصحة سكرى

– – ᴗ ᴗ/– – ᴗ ᴗ/– – ᴗ ᴗ/– – ᴗ ᴗ/– – ᴗ –/– – ᴗ –

Other bands impose a great deal of enjambment between the metrical units. An extract from a band in hazaj written in the eleventh century by Maʿtūq al-Mūwaṣawi (1025-1087 A.H.) is the following written in eulogy of a certain dignitary:

78

1 * – – ᴗ مفاعيلن جنى النصر

2 ᴗ/ᴗ – – ᴗ/ᴗ – – ᴗ مفاعيلُ مفاعيلُ مَ له الازرق والاسمرُ

2 ᴗ/ᴗ – – ᴗ/ᴗ – – فاعيلُ مفاعيلُ مَ في سفكهما الاحمرُ

79

2 ᴗ/ᴗ – – ᴗ/ᴗ – – فاعيلُ مفاعيلُن والشذر له نثورُ

2 ᴗ/ᴗ – – ᴗ/ᴗ – – فاعيلُ مفاعيلُ مَ في مربعه الاخضرِ

2 ᴗ/ᴗ – – ᴗ/ᴗ – – فاعيلُ مفاعيلُ مَ اذ عارضه امطرُ

2 ᴗ/ᴗ – – ᴗ/ᴗ – – فاعيلُ مفاعيلُ مَ بالابيض والاصفرِ

2 ᴗ – – ᴗ/ᴗ – – فاعيلُ مفاعيلُ مولى ملك الناسَ

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* Numbers denote the number of feet in each line.

The enjambment in this piece is detrimental to the rhyme ends in view of their different vowel signs which must be pronounced if the correct razaj metre is to be preserved.*

Other bands are undoubtedly mixed, employing both al-hazaj and al-ramal, and varying between them constantly. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, studying these mixed bands, arrived at the conclusion that band writers had a definite and elaborate system in the metrical formation of these bands, and she tried to set a metrical rule for band writing.[82] Although it is not difficult to apply her conclusions to some bands or parts of bands, which mix the two metres, they cannot apply to all cases as M. Jamāl al-Dīn aptly showed.[83] She had perhaps not encountered those bands which are of pure ramal or of pure hazaj although al-Dujaili's book and other collections were already available in Iraq at that time. Moreover, Jamāl al-Dīn correctly showed that even in the mixed bands the rules which she proposed cannot always be applied.[84]

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* The only alternative, from a prosodical point of view is that kharm is used. This is the omission of the first syllable of al-watad al-majmū' scanning - u (all prosodical signs on this page read from right to left), from the first foot of the verse, (unlike the catalectic in English which is the omission of a syllable from the last foot.) Thus instead of reading:

لـه الازرق والاسمـــــر في سفكهمـــا الاحمـــــر

ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ / ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ / ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ / ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ

with the ends of the rhymes vowelled, a sukūn is put on them and the following unit will begin with u - - :

لـه الازرق والاسمـــــرْ في سفكهمـــا الاحمـــــرْ

ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ / ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ / ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ / ـ ـ ـ ـ ـ

maf'ūlun mafā'īlun for the second unit. The use of kharm is allowed by prosodists, al-Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad excepted. Ibn Rashīq says that it is frequently used.[80] In the above instance it is possible that a reader might be tempted to read the rhymes with a sukūn in order to preserve the resonance and harmony of the rhyme endings. But in this instance, the use of kharm remains arbitrary. However, there are certain instances where a kharm has been irrevocably used and whether a vowel or a sukūn is used at the end of the previous rhyme the new unit still begins with a kharm as in this: زكي الاصل والفرع في العدل وفي السمع [81]

reading mafā'īlun mafā'īlun or mafā'īl; fā'īlu mafā'īlun or mafā'īl. The second unit here cannot be scanned in ramal and must be regarded as a hazaj with a kharm. Neither N. al-Malā'ikah nor M. Jamāl al-Dīn paid any attention to these formations in their writings on the subject.

Al-Malā'ikah's conclusion is that band writers exploited the "hidden relationship" between the foot mafā'īlun of al-hazaj and the foot fā'ilātun of al-ramal,[85] and contrived a means of changing from one to the other in the band by ending a hazaj line with fa'ūlun and a ramal line with fā'ilātān.[86]

The relationship between the two feet is well established, for the omission of a short syllable "sabab khafīf" at the beginning of a whole verse of ramal will change it all into a hazaj, and the addition of a similar syllable at the beginning of a hazaj verse will change it into a ramal. Two examples from B. al-Sayyāh proves this:

[87]

من فتاة او عجوز من ضلوع حطموها / فتاة او عجوز من ضلوع حطموها

--ᴗ- / --ᴗ- / --ᴗ- / --ᴗ- --ᴗ / ---ᴗ / ---ᴗ / ---ᴗ

فاعلاتن فاعلا تن فاعلاتن فاعلاتن مفاعيلن مفاعيلن مفاعيلن فعولن

where ramal changes into hazaj by the omission of the word "min". The addition of the syllable "idh" before the following verse in al-hazaj changes it into ramal:

[88]

تداوى خوفنا من علمنا انا سنحييه / اذ تداوى خوفنا من علمنا انا سنحييه

---ᴗ / ---ᴗ / ---ᴗ / ---ᴗ ---ᴗ / ---ᴗ / ---ᴗ / ---ᴗ

مفاعيلن مفاعيلن مفاعيلن مفاعيل فاعلاتن فاعلاتن فاعلاتن فاعلاتان

One can notice immediately that when such a change takes place the ramal into hazaj metre ends in fa'ūlun (or fa'ūl if the last foot of al-ramal had a qasr, i.e. had its "nūn" removed and a sukūn on its "tā'" becoming fā'ilāt); and the hazaj into ramal metre ends in fā'ilātān (or greater additions). Malā'ikah, however, in her discussion of the changes that take place in al-band between these two metres seems to believe that this hidden relationship between the two metres was subtly and creatively discovered by the first band writer and followed by others.[89] She overlooked the fact that it is the rhyme, and the desire of the poet or reader to stop at the end of units ending in rhymes, that single out this last foot in this particular construction. The lines of Ibn al-Khalafah (d. 1247AH) which she

herself quotes could be read in one metre if the reader did not wish to stop at the rhyme end:

90 فكـــم قد هذب الحـب بليـــــدا ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ
فغدا في مسلك الآداب والفضل رشيـدا ـ / ـ ـــ / ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ / ـــ ـ

Read with enjambment, the first syllable of the second line is added to - - ـ making it ـ _ _ ـ mafā'īlu. One can give endless examples of this in both metres.* What imposes the change from one metre to another, therefore, is the wish to stop at the end of the rhymed line so that the rhyme preserves its music and resonance, and to avoid enjambment. There seems to have been a kind of permissiveness among band writers to change from one metre to another, even in extremely short bands like some bands of 'Ali Bālīl.[91]

There is no scope in this work for a further discussion of the metrical variations and irregularities of al-band, but being a form relatively unknown to the general reader, and owing to its success in liberating two of the one foot metres in Arabic poetry, it was essential to dwell upon it a little and try to assess the ideas already written about it. The subject matter of these bands does not seem to differ much from some of the subject matter of the prose in the eleventh century A.H. and later. Bands from the eleventh century published in al-Dujaili's collection deal with the glorification of God and other religious matters

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* The idea of an additional syllable being imposed at the beginning of several bands in hazaj, thus changing its first unit into a ramal one, is acceptable for those bands which keep, after this first irregularity, to hazaj.[92] Malā'ikah here again rejected the idea that a short syllable "sabab khafīf" can ever be added to the beginning of verses,[93] a denial strongly rejected in turn by Jamāl al-Dīn. He rightly reminded al-Malā'ikah that there is an irregularity, "'illah", in Arabic prosody called "al-khazm" which gives an occasional licence to poets to add a syllable less than five letters to the beginning of verses.[94] An example of this is the following:

95 قـد / جلا ها جلـوة الخـــد ـ mafā'īlun mafā'īl
جلونـاه على معتـدل القـــد mafā'īlun mafā'īlu mafā'īl

usually in praise of great religious personalities. Other bands from that century indulge in the eulogy of eminent men. Such subject matter persists in the following centuries, but we also find bands describing nature, wine-drinking and women (although these are few), as well as bands of murāsalah, i.e. the exchange of correspondence between writers and friends, bands in praise of books, bands of satire, elegy and other nondescript subjects. Although these themes seem, at their face value, also common to the themes of verse in the period, the approach is prosaic and a conversational tone dominates most bands. Most important of all there is a complete lack of emotional tension in them, which is the first attribute of poetry. The similarity with prose is apparent if a comparison is made between any of the more usual types of bands and some prose writings of the same period. The following is a piece of prose written by Bālīl in the introduction to his own bands:

96 فاستجل منها ايضا ايها الفطن الالمعي لآلي مقالات غالية ، في مقامات عالية ، بواهر الفاظ لا تجارى ، وزواهر كلمات لا تبارى ، خرائد الفاظ ينفح من اذيالها مسك الصناعة ، وابكار معان يتضوع في اخمرتها عنبر البضاعة ، وكأنما مبانيها ملوك لبست تيجانها ، ومعان غوان قلدت لآ لئها ، ومرجان حدائق بهار ، ومحافل نسد وعرار ، ومآثر ود كبار ، ولطائف ذوات اخمر واسوار ، اقمار كلمات ، ما رامت مماثلتها نجوم خرائف الكلام ، الا وقد نكصت على اعقابها لا يعرف لها خاطر من عام ، ولا نثار عن نظام .

There is little difference in diction, imagery, tone, emotion or elevation between this piece and the typical bands quoted by al-Dujaili. The prose piece above is a typical example of the prose we read in letters, introductions to books or any sort of discourse in prose written in the Age of Decadence. The only basic difference between this piece in prose and the following extract from a band written by al-Sheikh ʿAbd al-Ḥusain Ṣādiq (1283-1361 A.H.) in the priase of a book is the use of metre (hazaj) in the following:

97 " هو العنبر مبثوثا على الواح كافور ،وقد شعت معانيه غدا نورا علـــى نـــور .
اذا يتلى على العيد ،فريد فيه مسطور ، تخال العيد عقد الجيد منبثـــــا
ومنثور . ما صوبت انظارى في مخضل ارجاء ، وصعدت بافكارى في آفاق بـــوزاء
الا وتجلت لي من اندية الروض ، ومن اخبية النجم ،دراري تقذف الحاســـــد
والشاني بالرجم ، فلا الشمس بلألأ محياها تحاكيها ،ولا البدر وحاشاه بمعناهـــا
يضاهيهـــا ... " الخ

Otherwise, the dilution, the indiscriminate use of adjectives, the endless repetition of phrases of similar meaning, the tepidity of feeling, the general banality as well as the sum total of stock emotions, attitudes and expressions, are very typical of the rhymed prose used during that period. This forces on the observer the question whether it is possible that these metrical experiments originated in an attempt to apply metre to a rhymed prose already decked with embellishments. That these bands originated in an attempt to liberate the two metres which it uses from the pre-determined number of feet in the traditional verse, as al-Dujaili hinted,[98] is not plausible, because such a desire and a need for liberation can only take hold on poets in an age of artistic rebellion where the creative energy is active and genuinely original. The suggestion that these bands were adopted from similar Persian creations,[99] does not contradict the above made suggestion, but rather supports it in its insistence on imitation and not on original creativity. Moreover, the Persian versions of the Arabic bands are described as rather banal forms of literature of a low level of creativity used first in funeral gatherings, then in comical writings.[100] The idea that bands are prosaic creations written in metre had been suggested early by Sulaimān al-Ṣā'igh in his book Tārīkh al-Mausil (Beirut, 1928), in which he says, speaking of 'Uthmān al-Baktāshi (twelfth century A.H.), that "he made his prose writings into bands" ...[101] It must also have been suggested by other writers, for N. al-Malā'ikah says that "it may be that an ignorant /writer/ might dare to call it /the band/ prose".[102] She is adamant that it is poetry, a belief she adopts because al-band is

based on metre and can be very musical at times. However, neither rhyme nor metre can make poetry out of these prosaic creations.[103] This judgement is based on the greatest majority of these bands and does not exclude the possibility that a gifted man of letters might have been able to produce bands which were more elevated than the average ones written by his colleagues. But these exceptions cannot rule out the fact that bands suffer from the same defects as the rhymed prose written at the time and share with it the same approach and even purpose. One could then bring forward the suggestion that bands are a form of versified prose "nathr manzūm" written in Iraq, probably in imitation of similar Persian art forms. The idea suggested by Jamāl al-Dīn that it is the same as free verse in recent Arabic poetry seems therefore strange in view of the extremely different content and diction employed in the two. However, from a prosodical point of view, the successful liberation of the two metres of hazaj and ramal in the bands so that the metrical unit in the band came to be based on the foot and not on a pre-defined and fixed number of feet in the line of poetry remains an early achievement of this form. The metrical freedom achieved in the bands is the same freedom enjoyed by the recent free-verse poet. There is no doubt that, apart from some early, isolated and probably chance creations of some metrical compositions enjoying such a kind of freedom,[104] the band is the first sustained and successful attempt at liberating the Arabic metre. The claim by any modern poet to the precedency cannot be entertained.

The painstaking but unsuccessful attempts before the forties of so many poets in the Arab world trying simultaneously to achieve a liberation of the Arabic metre seem needless when one remembers that an early knowledge of these bands would have saved the poet-experimentalists so much laborious effort. How much the more fortunate Iraqi poets who finally succeeded in writing free verse, knew of al-band, one would find it extremely difficult to surmise.

Free verse and the muwashshah:

Although al-band was relatively unknown to most poets trying to forge a revolution in form in the mid-century, the muwashshah form was familiar; although, as one can surmise from writings on it, modern poets in general were not aware of the presence of a large number of muwashshahāt which had deviated from the metres of traditional Arabic prosody. Trying to compare the modern free verse with those muwashshahāt in which the shatrs did not conform to the rule of equilibrium of Classical Arabic poetry, a critic, judging superficially, might assert that modern free verse was a natural offshoot of the muwashshah. However, the influence of this form on free verse is limited to the fact that the revival of the art of muwashshah in modern times was a link in the chain of active experimentation which took place in this century in the form of the Arabic poem, and also to the fact that they furnished an example of the possibility of having shatrs of different length in the same poem. But the muwashshah, as has been discussed earlier, is not a free form of verse.[105] In fact, it can well be said that it is even more restricted than the two hemistich form because of its rigidity and elaborate composition. It is the constriction to contain the muwashshah and other such variations within the strict limits of a fixed and often intricate pattern that one must remember when comparing it, from a prosodical point of view, with modern verse.[106]

Another point to stress here is the connection and dependence of the muwashshah on music. If a critic realises that what might seem to the casual observer to have been a great revolution in form was in fact nothing more than the diligent attempt by the poet-washshāh to apply Arabic words to certain tunes, then the idea of a great revolution in the poetic form per se would be abandoned.[107] It is important to remember in this context that the appearance of the muwashshah was not a revolution in

poetry, and was never meant to be so, that formal poetry was not touched by this attempt which did not infringe on its boundaries nor on its well-preserved "sanctimony", and that the muwashshah, although it did eventually treat all the themes of formal verse, never really played an elevated role in the history of Arabic poetry. Compared with the modern free verse, the muwashshah will be found basically different. Firstly, a great number of muwashshahāt deviate from the metres known to the Arabs, while free verse does not. Secondly, the Classical version is directly dependent on music, whereas free verse is completely divorced from music. Thirdly, it imposed strict shackles and had to conform to a great number of conditions, whereas free verse enjoys a freedom unprecedented in the history of Arabic poetry. Fourthly, the muwashshah in its concern with a pre-defined pattern and with song, preferred the themes more suited to the spirit of merriment and leisure, and a great frivolity of spirit dominates most muwashshahāt. Free verse, on the other hand, is a movement towards a greater seriousness in the subject matter and was linked, right from the beginning, with the modern experience of the Arab individual and nation, in its most crucial and tragic aspects.[108]

(iii) The Free Verse Movement

In the light of the continuous experiments in this century to break through the impasse of fixed pattern in the poetic form, it is idle to link the free verse movement* which started formally in 1949 (with the publication of the second diwan of N. al-Malā'ikah (1923) Shaẓāyā wa Ramād) with the effervescence of revolutionary political ideas at the end of the forties. In fact, the first experiments by the leaders of the later movement were effected before 1948, the date of the Palestine catastrophe which evoked in many Arab Intellectuals a strong attitude of rejection towards the sanctimonious relics of traditional culture among which was the old poetic form. The formal beginning of the movement of free verse must therefore be seen as an artistic phenomenon which succeeded, not only because it was artistically mature and timely, but also because it was suitable for the historic and psychological moment in which the Arabs were living. However, this should not mean that the successive experiments in form all through the decades of this century had not been prompted by a revolutionary spirit, for indeed they were. The early experimentalists in form, like the later ones, were all avant-garde who had courage and originality, and they all rejected the slavery of the modern poet to old, preconceived poetic forms. But their rebellion was not necessarily political in its essence. The free verse movement at the end of the forties was the fulfillment of their previous efforts, which, in its continuation of what they had begun, was able to exploit the flexibility achieved in the poetic form through their former efforts and succeed in imbuing the form of free verse which had been already stumbled upon by several previous experimentalists among them with finer poetic qualities and with more modern attitudes and diction.

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* From now on the term "free verse" will be used in this work to denote the last movement which flourished in the fifties. The free verse of Abū Shādi which mixed several metres in the poem, when mentioned, will be qualified.

The free verse movement began formally in 1949, as has been mentioned. The appearance in Baghdad of N. al-Malā'ikah's second diwan, Shaẓāyā wa Ramād with a preface in which she discussed what, in her opinion, was the purpose and wherein lay the artistic supremacy of free verse, heralded the movement, although in this diwan only eleven poems out of the thirty-two were in free verse. The appearance also of the second diwan of Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb (1926-1965), Asātīr, in 1950 in al-Najaf with several poems in free verse gave the necessary support to the movement, and free verse was established as a new form in Arabic poetry. However, before these two diwans were published, their authors had already been experimenting for some time, and it was at the end of 1947 that they had each produced the first indications of their efforts in the field. The embarrassing controversy which took place later on as to which of the two was the first to write a free verse poem in Arabic never resolved the question with finality,* and in the light of the results of both of their

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* N. al-Malā'ikah asserts that it was she who wrote the first "free poem" in modern Arabic poetry, when she wrote her poem "Al-Kūlīrā" which she published in Al-ʿUrūbah magazine, Beirut, of the 1st of December, 1947 (now suspended).[109] Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, on the other hand, asserts that his poem in free verse entitled "Hal Kāna Hubban?", which he published in his first diwan Azhār Dhābilah (Cairo, 1947) had been written before Malā'ikah's poem, since it appeared in a collection of poems published in Cairo, and although it had arrived in Iraq a few days after al-Malā'ikah's poem, it must have been written a good while before that.[110] In fact, al-Sayyāb, when he re-published this poem in his later collection Azhār wa Asātīr (Beirut, n.d.) put on it the date 29/11/46. Many arguments did take place around this question of precedence, in which many poets participated.[111] This should seem depressing to those who are aware of the long struggle of many courageous poets before these two to liberate the poetic form, and we shall not go through that here. However, it does seem artistically interesting to examine briefly the two poems in question, and see whether they had really succeeded in completely liberating the form of the Arabic poem.

Al-Sayyāb's poem is a love poem in the Romantic tradition. The poet had not yet discovered his spiritual and artistic potential and there is little to differentiate between this poem and that of Fu'ād al-Khashin discussed above:

†
4 العيون الحور لو اصبحن ظلا في شرابـــي 112

3 جفّت الاقداح في ايدى صحابـي

† Numbers in this and in the following example denote the number of feet in each line. .../...

3 دون ان يعطين حتى بالحباب

4 هيئي يا تأس من حافاتك السكرى مكانا

3 تتلا قى فيه يوما شفتانا

2 في خفوق والتهاب

4 وابتعاد شاع في آفاقه ظل اقتراب

Like al-Khashin's poem, al-Sayyāb has succeeded in liberating the form and his poem, like al-Khashin's is in the ramal metre. Moreover, this poem is not different in spirit and approach from any of al-Sayyāb's other poems in the diwan, which are in the Romantic tradition.

Nāzik al-Malā'ikah's poem is made up of four long stanzas in al-khabab metre, with a variation on rhyme in the following order a, bb, cc, b, dd, b, eeee. With the exception of the last four lines ending in eeee, all the other rhymes change in each of the following stanzas, but they keep their fixed order of change. Thus the second stanza follows this rule: f, gg, hh, g, ii, g, eeee, etc. There is also a marked variation in the number of feet from one line to another which repeats itself identically in every stanza:

2 * طلع الفجر 113

4 اصغ الى وقع خطى الماشين

6 في صمت الفجر ، اصغ ، انظر ركب الباكين

4 عشرة اموات عشرونا

4 لا تحص اصغ للباكينا

4 اسمع صوت الطفل المسكين

4 موتى ، موتى ، ضاع العدد

4 موتى ، موتى ، لم يبق غد

6 في كل مكان جسد يندبه محزون

4 لا لحظة اخلاد لا صمت

4 هذا ما فعلت كف الموت

3 الموت الموت الموت

5 تشكو البشرية ما يرتكب الموت

The first three lines seem to be quite revolutionary and free, but the poetess immediately conforms to the stanzaic rule which defines short sentences that are formed in the mind as such, curtailing the fluidity of the flow of words. For even if one stanza of this poem is read alone, it still looks stanzaic poetry because of these strong divisions of the lines of the poem. However, the stanzaic formation of the first stanza prefigures the other three, which follow exactly the same pattern, ending in the refrain of eeee. Al-Sayyāb was partly right, therefore, when he

.../...

efforts, seems most insignificant. The most significant fact about the beginning of this movement remains that N. al-Malā'ikah's Shaẓāyā was the first important platform on which the free verse experiment was launched, and that her writings on the subject, despite their deficiencies at the beginning, initiated the critical output which explained and supported it. On the other hand, some of Badr al-Sayyāb's experiments in free verse, as they appeared in his diwan Asāṭīr, combined the attraction of a powerful though still evolving new form to a content which was both artistically modern and spiritually vital to the angry young men of his time, and many of them took after him in their verse.[116] The poem which seemed to attract the other poets most was his interesting poem "Fi 'l-Sūq al-Qadīm"[117] published in Baghdad as early as 1948.[118] It was in al-kāmil metre and it helped to launch this metre as the first one to be effectively liberated and utilised in a subtle combination of form and content.[119] From the very beginning, Al-Sayyāb showed a Classical virility of style and spirit, and there was no mistaking the rare (though still budding) genius which lay behind these poems. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah's free poems showed a purity of style, a knowledge of technique and an artistic sobriety rare not only in women poets but also among men.[120] It was clear from the beginning that these two talents were going to lead the revolution in form in modern Arabic poetry with a good chance of success.

'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyāti, who rose to fame just after al-Sayyāb and al-Malā'ikah, appeared as a fully-fledged modern poet in 1954 when he

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* Continued from previous page.

said that Malā'ikah's poem, unlike his, was in the form of a muwashshah.[114] However, despite these restrictions, the poem remains revolutionary and important, for the poetess employed a rarely used metre, al-khabab, to write an elegaic poem. Al-khabab[115] had not been known to be employed in serious themes, let alone a tragic theme like this elegy on the cholera epidemic in Egypt. Moreover, the very use of a tragic theme in any sort of stanzaic form of identical pattern is in itself revolutionary, even if Nāzik had used one of the more familiar metres. In this, she was ahead of al-Sayyāb in his adherence to a rather light topic in his poem. However, from a purely technical aspect, his poem is the free one.

published his second diwan Abārīq Muhashshamah. He had begun writing free verse since the fifties, but it was this diwan which established him among the modern poets and dispelled the impression of the Romantic poet which his first diwan, Malā'ikah wa Shayātīn (1950) had created. It is interesting to note how the three of them had started as belated Romantics in their first diwans, and had changed, al-Sayyāb and al-Bayyāti quite drastically, and al-Malā'ikah very gradually. She had begun in 'Āshiqatu 'l-Lail as an introvert Romantic expressing characteristic sorrows and despair,[121] thus showing the same masochistic decadent streak which al-Rīhāni attacked so severely in many of the poets of the twenties and thirties in Egypt and elsewhere.[122] However, in 'Āshiqatu 'l-Lail she showed,in spite of this,more individuality and creativity than most of them. Although she never completely abandoned her basic introverted attitude, which kept on showing in her work every now and then, in Shaẓāyā as well as in Qarārat al-Maujah (1957), she was able to produce some poems of very high quality which laid bare the general dilemma of the Arab individual as well as the causes of man's general anxiety.[123] This is a quality not fully realised by her critics, who often tend to exaggerate her introverted attitude,[124] probably because of her personal approach to universal problems.

The Transfer of the poetic citadel to Iraq:

At the end of the forties, the literary scene in Egypt had no new singers of renown. It was still steeped in Romanticism and did not produce a poetic talent great enough to pave the way for the Egyptian creative impulse through the maze of experiments and intense theorisation which had filled the previous decades. It is interesting at this point to look retrospectively at Egypt and try to visualise how things must have stood for poetry there at the end of the forties. Egypt had for a long time encouraged poetic experiment and theorisation, but persistently,

Egyptian men of letters, with the exception of a few among whom Abū Shādi, M. Mandūr, M. Haddārah and A. Ḥasan and several others, are to be remembered with admiration, showed interest and appreciation only in the works of other Egyptians, much to the exclusion of others. Thus the benefit of the rich and progressive poetic experience of al-Mahjar and the rest of the Arab world in the first four decades eluded most of them. This attitude has been touched upon several times in the course of this work,[125] because of the disadvantage it had incurred on the poetic experience of this country which was in modern times,up to the fifties, the citadel of Arab learning and literature. A special emphasis was laid in this work on the unjustifiable attitude of rejection by certain Egyptian men of letters such as ʿAzīz Abāẓah for example, towards the important and central contribution of al-Mahjar.[126] Egypt's strongest poetic links at the time were with Western literature, both English (al-ʿAqqād, Shukri, Abū Shādi and most of the other Romantics), and to a lesser extent French* (Muṭrān, Shaybūb, Bishr Fāris, all three of Lebanese origin). But Egypt, which had just been the citadel of Classical revival and the home of Shauqi and his neo-Classical colleagues, did not limit itself even as early as the second decade, to a Romantic revolution in the spirit and content of poetry, but also experimented, sometimes drastically, with form and diction often simulating Western patterns. Although the change from a Classical to a Romantic attitude in poetry would perforce impose a change in both form and diction, in a healthy Romantic revolution following a great neo-Classical achievement, the change in both form and diction would have to be effected in mild measures. This was the case with the successful and effective Romantic revolution in al-Mahjar, with ʿUmar Abū Rīshah's sober experiment, and with that of Abū Shabakah and other successful poets of

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* In prose, however, Egyptian authors forged stronger links with French literature.

modern Arab Romanticism.* Abū Shabakah, it is surely remembered, adhered to a Classical strength in form and diction, experimenting with form only mildly. This adherence to a Classical strength in these two elements carried him through the immense change in theme, attitude and tone. In theme, it has been described how he succeeded in competing with established French poets and in adopting hitherto untreated themes. In tone he arrived at a masterful elasticity and versatility.

A true poetic revolution is never completely aware of itself and never realises beforehand the full extent of its dimensions. In Egypt, were to be found some of the most poignant, perhaps the most poignant, examples of deliberate experimentation in poetry, sustained over thirty years (roughly from the middle of the second decade to the middle of the fifth). In the history of Arabic poetry, random and rather isolated examples of deliberate experimentation not backed by real creative impulse existed,[127] but in modern Egypt, many avant-garde poets were actively and simultaneously pre-occupied with novelty over a long period. It can be rightly argued that the time was most opportune for experimentation in a poetic medium rendered strong by a Classical revival but brought close to the great danger of becoming fossilized within a sanctified Classical frame-work. And from this point of view these experiments** brought their own benefit of shaking the trenches and bulwarks of Shauqi's Classicism. Unfortunately, the poet-experimentalists concerned lacked the genuine creative impulse which instinctively hits the right target of change; and while poets of genuine talent and good poetic intuition such as ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā instinctively refrained from drastic innovations either in form or

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* Al-Shābbi, who was one of the most gifted Romantics of modern times, did suffer from the weaker cultural roots in Tunisia, and his phraseology was not as powerful as that of Abū Shabakah or Abū Māḍi for example.

** Experiments like those of al-ʿAqqād in ʿĀbir Sabīl, and of Shukri and Abū Shādi in the form (Shukri's blank verse and Abū Shādi's blank and free verse which mixed many metres in the same poem) and diction of poetry, etc.

treatment, others like Shukri and Abū Shādi were not able to manipulate the poetic tools with effect. This period, it is remembered, was backed by the strongest, longest and sometimes rather confusing theoretical arguments imaginable.*

At the end of the forties, one can see the Egyptian poetic arena not so much enriched by many genuine new experiments as brimming with ideas and concepts on the poetic art, although some of these had grown stale with repetition. However, Mandūr's contribution which mushroomed in the forties was a genuine cause of pride for Egypt at the time, sustaining Egypt's leadership in poetic criticism. His critical book, Fi 'l-Mīzān al-Jadīd conquered new areas for contemporary poetry. Describing the poetic field in Egypt at the time, he pronounced his rather exaggerated and harsh judgment of Egyptian poetry: it lagged a hundred years behind the Mahjar contribution.[129] We cannot agree with him fully here, but he must be given credit at least for sensing a general lack of real creativity and of new poetic energy in the Egyptian poetic field.

In Tunisia we heard no new voices after the death of al-Shābbi, and the country's poetic output seemed to limit itself again to its own boundaries. The kind of self-isolation of such countries as Morocco, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Kuwait and others, still persisted. However, it would be inaccurate to judge the poetic output of these countries by this isolation. The fact that this work has not attempted an evaluation of their poetry should not be taken as a judgment of value. For this work concentrates solely on the poetic output which had helped to direct the course of contemporary Arabic poetry, and experiments which limited themselves to their local boundaries cannot be included. It is clear from this situation, however, that leadership in poetry was not going to be achieved in any of these countries at the time in question.

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* The writings of Shukri in the introductions of his several diwans in the second decade, and of al-'Aqqād and Abū Shādi (both throughout their lifetime) are of particular interest to this work, but others such as M.A. al-Saḥarti, A. Khafāji and A. al-Shāyib participated in spreading Abū Shādi's avant-garde ideas and at the same time backing his unsuccessful poetic experiments which he gave as a model for those ideas; Sayid Qutub can be cited as a single example of those who supported al-'Aqqād's experiments, but there were many others.[128]

Lebanon, after the great output of its various poets in al-Mahjar and in Lebanon itself (where men like Ilyās Abū Shabakah, Salāḥ Labaki, Yūsuf Ghuṣūb and Sa'īd 'Aql dominated the scene for quite sometime), had already started closing in on itself, tending towards a sort of modern Classicism. The Symbolist school whose origin and achievement have been described above,[130] remained, at the hands of its foremost protagonist, Sa'īd 'Aql, aligned with nineteenth century French Symbolism and had few links with the local culture around it. By the end of the forties, Abū Shabakah was dead and Sa'īd 'Aql had already started to repeat himself and to acquire more defined Classical attributes.

On the other hand, Syria in the forties could boast of two poetic talents of avant-garde tendencies, 'Umar Abū Rīshah and Nizār Qabbāni (1919?). Both were creative and popular. Abū Rīshah, despite a vividness and a pictorial quality of imagination as well as strength of diction and emotion, limited himself to the two major themes sought by the general reading (and listening) public: love and nationalism. This limited the scope of his poetic development and bound him to the established poetic set of values in form and, to a certain extent, in content. Nizār Qabbāni, a rich merchant's son from Damascus, began his career by a manifesto in which he declared that "poetry is justified by the pleasure it gives!" but it turned out that this poetic pleasure was greatly mingled in his poetry with the sensuous descriptions of woman's physical beauty, some of which were most elaborate. Despite Qabbāni's many poetic attributes among which his unrivalled capacity to use the contemporary social idiom in poetry, his scope at the beginning of his career was far too limited from the point of view of theme and depth to put him in the lead of a basic revolution.

Jordan, with the remnant of Palestine included (after the 1948 catastrophe) was decapacitated artistically. Its best poets of the mature

generation were either dead (I. Tūqān) or dying (M.W. al-Tal), its people were in the grip of the fiercest devastation, its economy ruined. It had never had very strong cultural and artistic roots, but the political disaster had suffocated any potential cultural development for some time to come. Most of its educated talents had sought refuge or work outside its boundaries. Later on, in the fifties and sixties, they were to participate vigorously in the creation of avant-garde poetry, and poetic criticism, wherever they found themselves, but at the end of the forties, their creative energy was curtailed. Only one voice of importance sang in isolation in the West Bank of Jordan, that of Fadwā Tūqān, Ibrāhīm's younger sister. A gentle girl of talent and strength of character, she was going to sing with sustained vigour throughout the coming years, and poetry at her hands forged its way to an emotional veracity unexpected in the conservative stronghold of Nablus where she was born and reared. However, her point of view was not universal enough and her education was not rich enough to enable her to take a leading role in the general changes of outlook and technique which were due to take place soon in Arabic poetry.

It was apparent that the revolution in poetry had to take place elsewhere this time. This turned out to be Iraq, an old stronghold of poetry. At the end of the forties the influence of the mild poetic innovations introduced by al-Zahāwi, and al-Raṣāfi was over. Their poetry, especially that of al-Zahāwi, was not powerful enough or modern enough to leave a permanent effect on the poetical life in Iraq or the Arab world. Iraq had in the meantime produced a great poet, al-Jawāhiri, who expressed in his fiery verse the inner revolution and turmoil brewing in people's hearts. But despite the great emotional impact of his poetry on his audience, and despite the artistic value of his particular creative genius, he was too Classical in style and diction to become a model for the young poet-aspirants coming of age in the forties, although the best

in him: his virile, pictorial, emotional style and diction, was not going to elude the sensitive genius of al-Sayyāb who became his direct heir. However, the Iraqi poetic field was now ripe for a poetic revolution. It was comparatively free from a long history of failed experimentation, and was therefore clear headed if not about what it should do with poetry, but at least about what it should not do. Moreover, it was protected by the strong and living Classical tradition which, despite its well grounded Classicism, was open enough to receive with enthusiasm the work of such innovators as the Mahjari poet Ilyā Abū Māḍi whose Al-Jadāwil was published twice at al-Najaf in 1927. Above all, the Iraqis who are the best readers in the Arab world, had been quietly assimilating the best that was offered to them by the Arab literary output,[131] their deep, partly intuitive knowledge of poetry and feel of the poetic tools guiding them in their choice of what possessed real artistic value.

However, the contemporary Arab poetic contribution did not seem able to give sufficient nourishment or impetus to the generation of young Iraqi poets in the forties. If they were to achieve something vitally new, it was clear that some foreign fields would have to be explored and new sources of moral and artistic courage be opened. Human values needed to be released and expressed in modern terms and a stronger relationship with the inner experience of the nation, the whole Arab nation, had to be established. As it happened these foreign fields were mostly the English speaking countries, and so it was poets like Eliot and not Saint John Perse who were to play a great role in the poetic life of the generation of post 1948 in Iraq.

However the greatest good fortune was the fact that some of the most progressive talents of the Arab world were maturing in Iraq at this time. The genius of al-Sayyāb, the brilliant creativity of al-Malā'ikah and the gallant and sustained revolutionary attitude of al-Bayyāti, together with

the output of poets like Buland al-Ḥaidari (not abundant but terse, concise, vibrant with life and highly charged with emotion), and others, combined to give a strong front to the poetic revolution which they were to launch. Most of them had been educated at Baghdad University colleges, where they became acquainted with foreign literatures, some in English, others in translations. By a well-guided poetic instinct, they went straight to the more vital poetic experience of modern Europe. Poets like T.S. Eliot, Edith Sitwell, Yeats, Auden, Ezra Pound, as well as translations from some of the socialist poets like Pablo Neruda, Nazim Hikmat, Frederico Garcia Lorca, Eloir, Aragon and others were read avidly. The importance of this education cannot be overestimated, for it not only showed them the possibility of change, but also gave them the necessary models. The rise of the new movement of free verse was greatly needed at this time and it was quick to adopt and incorporate yet another movement, that of neo-Realism. In their experiment they were fulfilling a need, one that rises from the heart of art itself, for innovation and change. These poets were, in fact, working on two levels of consciousness, one realising, to some extent, the vitality of the movement, the other instinctive, prompted by an artistic intuition which did not realise, at the beginning, the true dimensions of the movement. This explains the naivity of the earliest ideas concerning the movement when compared with the potential depth and sophistication of the experiments themselves. The success of the movement and its quick adoption by numerous poets all over the Arab world shows that Arabic poetry at the end of the forties, after years of experimentation and aspirations, had become ripe for real change, awaiting only the touch of genuine poetic talent to bring it about.

SECTION 3: THE WIDENING SCOPE OF THE MOVEMENT: THEORY AND PRACTICE; FORM AND CONTENT

It has been said above that the liberty of free verse stems from the fact that the poet is not bound to any preconceived law in the ordering of feet in a line of poetry. In a good poem written in free verse, there is, to use L. Abercrombe's words, "a sense of a progressively enlarging movement"[132] which builds up to a climax. The poet's only guide in this is his own artistic feel of rhythm and music and the need of the content of the poem for a particular form that would harmonise with it.[133]

The earliest ideas on this movement were given by Nāzik al-Malā'ikah in her introduction to Shaẓāyā wa Ramād. "The new style in the ordering of the Khalilian feet* liberates the poet from thousands of shackles", she said.[134] She then proceeded to explain why, in her opinion, this new form was better than the two hemistich form. The reason she gives is that the constriction to fill the pre-fixed measure of this latter form leads to padding and dilution. The new form evades this by allowing the poet to stop when his meaning is ended, and it is therefore conducive to greater conciseness and ease.[135]

This explanation seemed very clever and apt at the beginning of the movement, and none of the writers interested in the movement challenged it.[136] However, it is apparent that this justification of the movement is a false one because it implicitly denies any possibility of writing good poetry in the old two hemistich form, a denial belied immediately by the many great poems written in that form throughout the ages. It is not plausible that Nāzik meant it that way, but that, owing to her youth and

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* Referring to al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdi (d.170 A.H.), the prosodist who discovered and recorded the prosodical laws underlying Arabic verse, arranging and naming the different metres which he found to be fifteen. He did not discover al-mutadārak from which al-khabab is derived, a metre discovered later by al-Akhfash (b.216 A.H.).

inexperience at the time, as well as to the novelty of the movement, she had not yet arrived at a real analytic explanation of the deeper artistic causes that lay behind it. Other writers shared her opinion.[137] Perhaps later, when the deluge of bad, sprawling poems in free verse started to appear, they may have realised that padding and dilution are not caused by writing in a special form, but by writing bad poetry. There is usually no question of padding in the two hemistich form when handled by an expert,[138] for then the right unit in which the length will be equal to the content,[139] will be composed at once.*

It is apparent that the best examples of poems in free verse at the beginning of the movement were ahead of the theories that tried to explain them and give them legitimacy. They were dictated by the needs of the poetic art at the time. Their success gives an interesting contrast to some of the earlier unsuccessful attempts at innovation which former poets tried to base on modern theories of art adopted from Western poetic experience, and which could not match them. In contrast, the poets of

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* This is an experience which perhaps only poets can realise. A poet's creative energy tunes itself subtly, unconsciously, to the predetermined length of the hemistich which is inseparable from its rhythm. As he composes, the words usually form themselves in an arrangement which fits the metrical measure without overstepping the meaning. This description would also fit the stanza form, but in a complex stanza there is more artificiality and awareness of its shackles, of changing lengths and rhymes, of complexity and deliberateness. But in the two hemistich form, for so long the established form of the best verse that has been written in the language, the regularity of the metrical units has become so deeply rooted in the subconscious of the creative energy of generations of poets that it has almost become an instinct. The whole creative process is different. A good poet usually composes without too much awareness of metrical shackles peculiar to this form,[140] although even the best of them can resort to some sort of padding at times.[141] Another point of great importance is that all metrical constructions are limited by their own metres, and in free verse a poet will find that he is not as free as he thinks, nor is he at liberty to end a line when he chooses, for he must conform to the pre-requisites of the metre. Of course, free verse, over the years, was able to find many new outlets to metrical freedom, which cannot be enjoyed by the two hemistich form. This will be discussed below. What these critics should have said was that free verse allows greater freedom of metrical manoeuvres and not that it is a contrivance to get rid of a form (the two hemistich form) which induces padding and artificiality.

the free verse movement did not begin to realise the vitality of this movement except after several years of experimentation. Then, artistic, social and psychological explanations began to be attempted. In 1954, al-Sayyāb, who seldom pre-occupied himself with criticism, wrote a short comment on free verse in which he said that free verse was not only a prosodical phenomenon but also a new artistic structure which embodied a new Realistic attitude. It came, he said, in order to crush Romantic sentimentality, Classical rigidity, the oratorical poetry and the literature of ivory towers.[142] Another Iraqi writer, writing in the same year, asked the question: "Is it not right that a new context in literature should see new forms?"[143] thus asserting not only the firm connection between form and content but implying that the new form is the outcome of the new contexts in poetry, a statement which is not altogether accurate, as has been shown. However, a technical reason for the movement is implied when he says that this form was sought not for its own sake but in order to save Arabic poetry from the lyricism of its monotonous rhymes.[144] In this comment, the connection of the poetry written in free verse with neo-Realism is asserted in no uncertain terms: "Neo-Realism, which is victorious in Iraq, has embraced this form because it suits committed poetry (he says 'literature'). A poet who takes his theme from life and reality refuses to hide behind rhymes, decorativeness, stylishness and personal aspirations".[145]

When these writers were writing in 1954, the experiment of free verse had avalanched into a considerable movement.[146] N. al-Malā'ikah's interpretations of the movement were developing too, but although she corrected in her collected essays published in Qadāyā many of her previous ideas (published over the years in various literary magazines), one could still detect certain contradictions in them. For example her correct idea that free verse is basically a prosodical phenomenon,[147] seems to

contradict her idea, which she puts forward in a different chapter, that psychological and social causes lay behind the movement.[148] This contradiction could have been averted if she had taken care to connect the two causes together. For the fact is that the two are not necessarily contradictory; while free verse began, in its initial stage, as the result of experimentation in form by two young Romantics (she and al-Sayyāb), it caught fire because the psychological and social forces made it a welcome change. The accumulated poetic experience of this century was rich enough by the end of the forties to be fully exploited, and the impulses towards change and revitalisation which are at work within any living art had arrived with Arabic poetry at a point wherein change was necessary. The poets of the new generation were basically and genuinely different from those of the older one. Their culture was wider and far more modern. Thanks to the achievement of the older generation who educated them in Romanticism and Symbolism, they were able to assimilate the European moderns. Now, instead of the nineteenth century Romantics and Symbolists, the twentieth century various poetic experiments were being studied and, to a certain extent, possessed. On the other hand, they had experienced the most devastating discovery of the tragic, unbearable and needless impotence of the nation; and being more intellectually mature and modern than their elders, they were able to face the problem with greater realism and to restate the situation in more modern terms. In fact they were among the first to suffer greatly from the post 1948 situation. None of the leading poets escaped the aftermath of this debacle, and those who had started out laden with the relics of previous poetic (and social) indifference to the human situation around them, were soon converted. One after another entered the furnace which was to turn into a battle ground in the sixties. But this is beyond the scope of our work.

The established form had reached "the limits of its idioms", to use

C.M. Bowra's apt phrase.[149] The Romantic and Symbolist experiment, which had utilised the two hemistich form, proving its enormous suppleness and flexibility, had filled it with current words carrying connotations and laden with emotions belonging to a different experience and a different poetic education. Moreover, it had been already too richly imbued with centuries of lyrical usage. The tragic and rather sombre aspects of the age after the Palestine debacle needed a form free of all the connotations which might hinder the creation of poems to fit these themes and attitudes. Art needs to change its form every now and then in order to renew its tools. Very few poets writing in the two hemistich form in the fifties were able to escape the manner, tone, emotional references and special emphasis of their elders, sometimes of the neo-Classicists, or of the Romantics, or of the Symbolists. This was precisely because of the quasi-contemporaneousness of their poetic experiments and of their usage of more current idiom and language. It was a poetry in which, again to use a sentence from Bowra, "regular verse and sonorous music impart a special pleasure through it",[150] a sort of pleasure which did not seem appropriate for the present epoch.

In an essay she wrote in 1958, N. al-Malā'ikah speaks of some of these forces, of the rejection of what she calls the monotonous pattern,* of the yearning, on the part of the new generation, for independence in the choice of their own form, of a new and more realistic point of view towards life, and of the preference of content to form.[151]

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* The two hemistich form became notorious in the fifties for monotony. However, although the monorhyme might be monotonous at times, monotony is more a quality of individual poets than of a particular style. Rhyme and regular form also existed in many languages (the English heroic couplet in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the French alexandrine in the same period).[152] It is the artist's adaptation of them that decides their capacity to excite and refresh or to cause monotony and boredom, and although this form is accused by many of depending solely on external music,[153] it takes its very life from its capacity of allowing the poet to charge it with spurts of emotions that can produce very vivid effects, far from monotony.[154]

Other poets and critics were also trying hard to analyse the dimensions of the new experiment. In a lecture given in Beirut in 1957 Yūsuf al-Khāl who, in the winter of that same year, had just started his magazine Shi'r dedicated to poetry, referred to the new poetry as "Al-Shi'r al-Hadīth",[155] a term which was to replace for most people the term the movement had been known with, "Al-Shi'r al-Hurr".* The later predominance of this new term shows that the change has taken place in the movement to a complete fusion of form and content. In fact, the attempt at achieving a full renewal of the tools not only of form and structure, but also of content, attitude, tone, diction and interest, was being consciously as well as instinctively pursued, as the poetic education was steadily widening, the human consciousness of the poets deepening and the social and political stresses avalanching.

What was the gist of this "modern poetry" in al-Khāl's opinion?

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* These are by no means the only terms given to this poetry. M. al-Nauwaihi used for it the term "al-shi'r al-jadīd" which he made the title of his book Qadiyyat al-Shi'r al-Jadīd, then, at the end of his book presented a formal suggestion to poets and critics to call it "al-shi'r al-muṭaliq". This he gives as an alternative to the term "al-shi'r al-hurr" which al-Malā'ikah gave to this poetry. He does not discuss the term "al-shi'r al-hadīth" although it had been in use for several years among established critics and poets, when he wrote his book in 1964. Al-Khāl's term stems, in fact, from the Classical usage when the Abbasids divided their poets into muḥdathūn (or muwalladūn) and mutaqaddimūn.[156] The term nearest to this was "al-shi'r al-mustaḥdath" used by I. al-Abyāri.[157] Nuwaihi's first usage, "al-shi'r al-jadīd" was also used by Zaki Najīb Maḥmūd,[158] as well as by 'Izziddīn Ismā'īl, another writer on modern Arabic poetry, in his book Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āṣir. I. al-Amīn, however, had called it earlier "shi'r al-taf'īlahah".[159] However, if al-Nuwaihi's term is better than the term "al-shi'r al-hurr" because of the latter's implication of complete freedom, it remains tied to form. Al-Khāl's term covers, as did the Abbasid term, both the changes in form and content. The idea of "modernity" and "contemporaneousness" has been obsessive in the fifties to avant-garde poets and critics, particularly those who catered to Shi'r magazine, and the term seemed to respond well to their quest. However, one must admit that there is scope for ambiguity in this term because what is modern now will not remain so in future decades. But people will definitely tend to link the term with this comprehensive movement starting in the fifties, as we link the term "muḥdathūn" with the Abbasid innovators only. At any rate, an already established term is better adhered to if a generation understands what is meant by it.

His first approach was to attack the bulk of the existing poetic contribution in the fifties.* In his opinion, poets persevered in writing poems in which the unity of the verse and not of the whole poem was adhered to, just as in Classical poetry.** They also persisted in the same objectives and themes of the old poets, and their outlook to things, their "cosmic experience of life" still stemmed from an "ancient, ruminative mentality". This showed, he explained, that life for these poets had not changed except in its exteriority. Their minds were still "drowned in emotional Romanticism, sentimentalism and Naturalism, and were still lurking in the dark /recesses/ of form, primitiveness, introversion and occultism , afraid to face the truth ..."[160]

This is a rather strong attack which did not allow for the fact that the very experiments he attacked as inadequate, e.g. Symbolism in Lebanon,[161] were timely and vital at their time, and lay at the basis of the modern experiment. The steady line of development of Arabic poetry which this work has tried to follow and describe, was usually completely overlooked by some of the modern writers on poetry. But the new era is characterised by sharp rejections of past experiences in poetry, in politics, in life. Moreover, al-Khāl was not telling the story of Arabic poetry in modern times, but was preaching a new concept, and like all preachers for new artistic concepts or for new political ideologies, he instinctively set to destroying existing standards, in order to prevent them from imposing their inevitable taboos against his new creed.[162]

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* He gave this lecture at Al-Nadwah al-Lubnāniyyah in Beirut and was specifying "Lebanese poetry". However, his analysis covers the whole poetic contribution in the Arab world. Later, in his magazine, it was Arabic and not merely Lebanese poetry which was made the object of analysis, attack or comparison.

** Of course, this observation which can apply to some of the poetry that was still dominant, overlooks the magnificent contribution to this poetic element by several modern poets before the fifties, many of whom have been discussed above.

But he struck a correct tone when he said that the present poetry was not a modern poetry when compared to contemporary world poetry. Some leading poets, he said (naming Sa'īd 'Aql), were living physically in one epoch and spiritually and intellectually in another, and were therefore not living at all. The spirit of the age must be reflected in modern poetry and the modern poet must share with the other poets in the world the responsibility of modern civilisation.

But the best part of this important lecture is his descriptions of the elements of the "experimental avant-garde" poetry which he wants. The points he gives are worth recalling here:

1. Poetry should be the expression of a lived experience in its full truth, as the poet realises it with all his being, i.e. in both his mind and his heart.*
2. Use should be made of the living image, either descriptive or mental, instead of simple similes and metaphors or verbal abstractions and rhetorical devices which the old poets used. Modern poetry should present a challenge to logic and should destroy the old traditional patterns.
3. A change over must take place from the old words and expressions which have exhausted their vitality to words and expressions rising from the heart of the experience and from the life of the people. (In fact, this poet and several of his colleagues were very preoccupied with language and the problems which the Arabic language presents, as will be discussed shortly.)

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* This statement harks back to Bowra's description of "truth" in modern European poetry. "The truth which they demand /the modern poets/ is not mere truth or ordinary truth, nor a simple avoidance of falsehood, but the whole truth in the full sense of the phrase, the truth as they see it with their whole nature when their wits and sensibilities and emotions are all at work."[163]

4. Arabic poetic rhythms must be developed to suit the new contexts, for "there is no sanctimony to the traditional metres".

5. The structure of the poem must be based on the unity of experience and the general emotional atmosphere, not on intellectual and logical sequence.

6. The first and last objective of poetry is man, in his pain and joy, his sin and repentance, his freedom and slavery, his life and death. Any experience not encompassing man is artificial and banal.

7. The importance of understanding the Arab spiritual and intellectual heritage in its true value must be realised and the proclamation and assessment of this truth made without fear, hesitation or compromise.*

8. Delving into the European spiritual and intellectual heritage, every effort must be made to understand it and react to it.*

9. Benefiting from the poetic experiments achieved by the poets of the world; our modern poets today must not shy away from them** as the old Arab poets had shied away from Greek literature.

10. Fusion should be with the spirit of the people and not with nature. The people are an inexhaustible source of life; Nature is a temporary and changing state.[164]

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* No.7 sounds ominous here, and implies that there would be a great deal to reject in the Arab cultural heritage, needing courage and fortitude to announce. On the other hand, No.8 shows his early preference to European cultural experiences. The coming years were to confirm this attitude on his part and on that of members of the Shi'r Group, (Jamā'at Majallat Shi'r), much to the eventual detriment of the fine and exclusive magazine. The Group, in fact, did not stem from a deep and thorough knowledge of the Classical heritage, but probably from an instinctive shrinking away from the repetitive element in the contemporary Arab literature based on traditional lines, and the firm grasp it had on the minds of the majority. But they went to dangerous lengths in their rejection and did not back it with studious evidence. However, the attacks helped to shake the sanctimonious and irrational attachment to redundant cultural motifs which had persisted up to modern times.

** This was rather superfluous, for there had not been any shying away from Western poetic experience for quite a long time.

An emphasis on vision is made by Adūnīs (1930), writing in 1959.

Modern poetry is a vision - a change in the order of things, a rebellion against traditional forms and the poetic order, and a rejection of the old poetry's attitudes and styles which have exhausted themselves. Its task is to see what habit and familiarity prevent us from seeing, to discover hidden relationships, to employ such language and emotions as are fit for expressing all this. Modern poetry, he says referring to a statement from Baudelaire, neglects the event, for it deals with more permanent phenomena - it is directed towards the future. And because it neglects the event, it ceases to be realistic, for realism brings it nearer to ordinary prose in compelling it to use words in their familiar context. Realistic poetry deals with preconceived ideas and feelings, and its whole function is to sing them in rhythmical structures. The essence of modern poetry, on the other hand, is based on the opposite of realistic values. In order to be truly modern, poetry should have as an aim the poem itself, not an idea or an external problem.[165]

But this is trying to prove an illogical premise by a logical sequence of reasoning. If modern poetry is against involvement in events, it should not follow that it is unrealistic. Neither are realistic things based only on events, nor are events categorically anti-poetic. In an era of eventful happenings that have changed the map of the area and uprooted and unsettled millions, the event is immediately translated into all kinds of experience, from the metaphysical which he seems to favour,[166] to the communal, to the personal. And this experience is not only varied but also unpredictable, and reactions to it do not have to deal at all with preconceived ideas or emotions. Adūnīs himself does not live in his poetry in the void, but a great part of his poetry is based on very realistic experience. In fact, it is the capacity of the modern poet to give a new and individual flavour to the meaning of actual communal experience that gives weight to the new

poetic experiment. If one agrees with the writer that a completely new approach was necessary for poetry, one cannot accept his conception of realism as anti-poetry.

A great ambition is revealed when he says that in order that poetry should be great we should be able to glimpse through it a vision of the world.[167] This is correct if one is dealing only with great poetry. But in a general article addressing a whole generation of poets one is talking about diversified experiments, and one's terms should be more general; for there are in any one generation of poets many experiments which are good, attractive, interesting and artistically worthwhile without being great.

But Adūnīs is right when he rejects the direct involvement of poetry in a didactic attempt at spreading an ideology or achieving reform. "Poetry is not a reflection, but a conquest. It is not delineation, but creation."[168]

And he is also correct in saying that the emotional reaction in poetry should be both personal and communal, individual and cosmic at the same time,[169] although one still feels that he is still talking only about great poetry, denying to a drastic degree many of the simpler and interesting experiments which are poetically illuminating without verging on such great heights.

As regards the poetic form, modern poetry, because it is a vision and a discovery, ambiguous, anti-logical and anti-dogmatic, needs more freedom. Moreover, form is not music, but a certain kind of structure which remains capable of change. Its music stems not from the harmony of its external elements, but from a mobile internal harmony which is the essence of music.[170] This is again a denial of one quality by asserting its opposite, and it is impoverishing to poetry to reject all experiments which choose to stress the musical potential of metre and rhyme if the poet sees fit to employ them. What modern poetry seeks is the assertion that

external music is not inevitable to a poem if the poet feels that his experience needs a hushing down of the sonorous elements of the music of poetry. He is seeking the freedom to manoeuvre his verse in whatever pitch, flow, rhythm and resonance he chooses. One can say therefore, that all poetry need not be sonorous and musical, but that musical verse is certainly not anti-poetry.[171]

Like European modern poets, the idea of Beauty as a quest for the poetic form or for poetry as a whole is rejected.[172] Moreover, the difference between poetry and prose should not yield to the logic of verbal structures, for this is a distinction of form and not essence.[173] This is an attempt to defend the prose poem which was later to be discussed by him at greater length.

To understand the movement of modern poetry one should, in his opinion, remember the following points: the necesssity of rejecting preconceived ideas and forms, as well as traditional models even though they are regarded as paragons of perfection, of avoiding fragmentation of judgment in which the poem is assessed for its various elements and not as a whole, of abandoning subjective lyricism and of repetitiveness.[174] Modern poetry, he concludes, is a dedicated movement, bent on feeling its way slowly. It is the tension and essence of our contemporary life in order that that life should open up and arrive at unlimited ends.[175]

Footnotes

1. See above p.664.

2. For more on al-mukhammas see I. Anīs, Mūsīqā 'l-Shi'r, third edition, Cairo, 1965, pp.285-7; A. Ḥammoudah, Al-Tajdīd fi 'l-Adab al-Misri al-Ḥadīth, pp.50-1.

3. See Ibn Rashīq al-Qairawāni, Al-'Umdah fī Maḥāsin al-Shi'r wa Ādābihi wa Naqdih , ed. by M.M. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Cairo, 1963, pp.172-80.

4. Ibid., p.180.

5. For more details on al-muzdawij, see Anīs, op.cit., pp.280-2.

6. For more on al-rubā'iyyāt see ibid., pp.284-5.

7. Ibid., p.216; M. Diyāb, Tārīkh Ādāb al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah, Cairo, 1898, Vol.I, 136-7.

8. Op.cit., p.216.

9. Diyāb, op.cit., p.137; for more on al-dubait and its variations see Ḥammoudah, op.cit., p.44.

10. J. al-Rikābi, Fi 'l-Adab al-Andalusi, Cairo, 1960, pp.19-20; A. al-Ahwāni, Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk wa Mushkilat al-'Uqm wa 'l-Ibtikār fi 'l-Shi'r, Cairo, 1962, p.176; E.I. under Muwashshah.

11. The best Classical reference on this art is Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's famous book on al-muwashshahāt entitled Dār al-Ṭirāz fī 'Amal al-Muwashshahāt, ed. by J. al-Rikābi, Damascus, 1948; see pp.35, 36, 37 and 39. The dependence of this art on music, or at least its firm connection with it, is a well recognised fact among modern writers and scholars. For a single example see E.I. under TIK.

12. Op.cit., p.25, as opposed to al-aqra', which is without an overture.

13. Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk insists that muwashshahāt which conform with the metres of Arabic poetry without any deviation are to be denounced for "they are nearer to mukhammasāt ... and are only written by the weaker poets or by those who want to imitate that which they do not know...", op.cit., p.33. Whether it is in the traditional monorhymed two hemistich qaṣīdah, or in the variations of the muzdawij, rubā'ī, mukhammas, musammaṭ, etc., the various hemistichs of the poem (in the qaṣīdah the two shaṭrs which form the bait and which are called the ṣadr and the 'ajuz) are equal in the number of their feet. In the qaṣīdah the verses share the vowel signs on the end rhymes also. This is a distinctive feature of Classical poetry in Arabic, a feature of balance which had become such a flexible medium that it was used most aptly by such Romantic poets as Ilyās Abū Shabakah and Abū 'l-Qāsim al-Shābbi, despite its Classical nature (Classical here as opposed to Romantic). For a single instance of this insistence by Classical savants on balance see al-Bāqillāni's comment in I'jāz al-Qur'ān, ed. by Aḥmad Ṣaqr, Cairo, [1954?], p.84.

14. Dār al-Ṭirāz, p.35.

15. Ibid., pp.55-6.

16. Ibid., p.36.

17. Ibid., p.37.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., p.36.

22. Ibid. However, this dependence of the muwashshahāt on music as asserted by Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk did not convince the German Orientalist Martin Hartmann. In a painstaking study, he tried to connect these muwashshahāt with the sixteen metres of the Arabs. To him Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's representation is deficient and shows the superficiality of judgment typical to 'orientals', a not too kind statement; see Das Arabische Strophengedicht, I, Das Muwaššah, Weimar, 1897, p.104 n. Hartmann then draws 146 alleged variations on the sixteen metres of the Arabs added to them three more types (maf'ūlātu, mutafā'ilatun which he calls chabab type and a dubait type) see ibid., pp.200-1. He did not take into consideration the clear statements given by Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk as well as by Ibn Bassām whose declaration in Al-Dhakhīrah fī Mahāsin Ahl al-Jazīrah (Cairo, 1943, Vol.I, ii, 2), that "Most of the muwashshahāt have no connection with the metres of the Arabs" Hartmann cites on p.109, translating it from Dozy's translation. He also refers to an important passage by Safiy al-Dīn al-Hilli (d. 749 A.H.) from his Al-'Ātil al-Hāli wa 'l-Murakhkhas al-Ghāli, which deals with zajal quoting it in Arabic (see p.114 and n.). The zajal is in fact closely connected with the muwashshah. H.G. Farmer sees in the two arts a popular form (see A History of Arabian Music to the XIIIth Century, London, 1929, p.198). W. Hoenerbach, the editor of Al-'Ātil, Wiesbaden, 1955, told the present writer in April, 1958, that there was, he believed, a definite connection between the muwashshah and zajal on the one hand and the then existing tunes in Spain on the other. The passage in Al-'Ātil leaves no doubt as to this dependence on existing tunes, especially when the writer says "They composed according to every part words matching it in /its quality/ of heaviness and lightness, and which can take its place when sung". See Al-'Ātil, p.26. Despite all these references to the dependence of these popular forms on music, Hartmann doggedly persisted in trying to prove that the metres in the muwashshahāt stemmed from Arabic metres. See also E.I. under TIK where Hartmann's experiment is rightly rejected. There is another point which seems to be important in this context and which none of the writers, as far as the present writer is aware, has mentioned. This is the fact that the different parts of a stanza, while matching exactly in their rhyme endings with the corresponding parts in the other stanzas of the same muwashshah, are not always identical with them in their number of syllables or even in their metrical structure. In a muwashshah of five stanzas by al-A'mā al-Tutīli (d.525 A.H.), identical shatrs of the six qufls are thus (examples given here are the third shatrs of the qufls. N.B. This muwashshah is tam and the first qufl is the matla'.)

عن رشا احور ، ڈالصبا منظر ،فلن يستتر ،وهو بي اجدر ، ڈيف تغدر ،شرف المفخر

-- / -ᴗᴗ , --ᴗ- , -- / -ᴗ- , -ᴗ/--ᴗ, --/--ᴗ- , -- / -ᴗ-

so that we have a strange collection of different feet: fā'ilun fa'lun, fā'ilātun fa'lun, fa'ūlun fa'al, fā'ilun fa'lun, fā'ilātun, fa'ilun fa'lun. It would be impossible for these feet to interchange with each other in strict metre and their presence in a corresponding part of a muwashshah could be explained by suggesting that they were written with the intention of fitting a certain

melodic and rhythmic framework which would be capable of accommodating them aptly by lengthening or compressing the words or syllables where necessary to make up the required measure. There are also other instances where a difference in metre does not seem to matter greatly. For the above example see Dīwān al-A'mā al-Tutīli, ed. by Iḥsān 'Abbās, Beirut, 1963, pp.275-7; for another good example see Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk, op.cit., pp.71-2, the third shatrs of the qufls which scan as follows : fa'ūlun fa'ilān; maf'ūlun fa'ilān; maf'ūlun fā'ilān; maf'ūlun fā'ilan; mustaf'ilun fa'ūl; maf'ūlun fa'ilān. There are many comparable examples in the more complex forms of the muwashshaḥāt, but the above should be sufficient.

23. J. Ribera was very keen on proving this, but was unable to do so because neither did the Arab historians say anything in detail about this point (see his book Music in Ancient Arabia and Spain, London, 1929, p.136), nor was there adequate Romance folk-lore from that period to help him with his research; see his arguments on pp.126, 136 and 137. The Egyptian literary historian, M. Diyāb, op.cit., pp.129-30, mentions with regard to the muwashshah, the importation of foreign tunes according to which words were composed. He says:

"وكان المغنون يأخذون اللحن منها ويتأملون في دوره وتوقيعه ،مراعين متحركاته وسواكنه وينظمون الكلام على حواه ،وعلى قدر ما فيه من الاغصان والسلاسل." [line mine] Diyāb, writing in 1897 cites no reference for this, and he is quoted here only to show how, even before Ribera made his long study on Arabic music and sought to prove the dependence of the muwashshah on indigenous Spanish tunes, the idea of foreign tunes being the basis of the muwashshah was already in circulation. B. al-Bustāni in Udabā' al-'Arab fi 'l-Andalus wa 'Aṣr al-Inbi'āth, Beirut, n.d.pp80-? asserts that these songs were influenced by foreign literature alive in their environment and should be regarded, therefore, as Arabised songs. Muṣṭafa 'Awad al-Karīm in his book on the art of muwashshah, quotes several writers who have tried to connect the invention of this art form with already existing songs in the Romance or other languages; see his book, Fann al-Tawshīḥ, Beirut, 1959, pp.107-10. 'Awad al-Karīm himself is adamant that this was so, although he was unable to prove this point with finality.

24. This strangeness is apparent in those muwashshahāt which are not based on Arabic metrics. Because of the elements in them which are foreign to Arabic metres, they were not imitated in shi'r, and they are not rewarding to declaim. Nor were they revived in modern times, for when Shauqi and his contemporaries such as Sulaimān al-Bustāni and Rashīd Nakhlah tried to bring about a revival of the Andalusian muwashshah, they imitated the simpler kinds which were nearest to the Arabic qasīdah. (See Manāhil al-Adab al-'Arabi, Al-Muwashshahāt al-Andalusiyyah, Beirut, 1949, Vol.III, 64-90 for a long muwashshah by al-Bustāni; pp.91-3 for another by R. Nakhlah and pp.94-120 for another long muwashshah by Shauqi.) It is logical that the moderns should refrain from reviving the patterns whose rhythms they did not understand.

25. On al-kharjah see Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk, op.cit., pp.30-3, especially p.32; see also the argument of 'Awad al-Karīm, op.cit., pp.107 and 109-10; see also Dīwān al-A'mā al-Tutīli, pp. ث and ز ; see also E.I.

26. Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk, op.cit., p.38.

27. On the lightness of the main themes of the muwashshahāt see al-Maqqari, Azhār al-Riyād fī Akhbār ʿIyāḍ, Cairo, 1940, Vol.II, 227-8; see also N. al-Malāʾikah, Shiʿr ʿAli Mahmūd Ṭāhā, pp.70 and 206; see also Manāhil al-Adab al-ʿArabi, Al-Muwashshahāt al-Andalusiyyah, Vol.I, 6; J. Rikābi, op.cit., pp.305-7; ʿAwaḍ al-Karīm, however, does not refer to this in his section on the subject-matter of this art form but rather ends it with the admiring statement that it left nothing which formal poetry treated but accommodated it; see op.cit., p.38. This, despite the fact that this writer recounts the disparaging attitude of a number of Classical writers to the muwashshahāt and the abstinance of many from writing about them, some of them because of their lack of seriousness; see ibid., pp.112-6.

28. I. Anīs, Mūsīqa al-Shiʿr, pp.291-2. However, he regards this example as complicated. K.J. commenting in Al-Ādāb on the origin of free verse also mentioned ʿArīḍah's above-mentioned attempt as an early form of free verse; see the April number of 1954, p.69; so did ʿIsā al-Nāʿūri, Al-Adīb, January, 1953, p.92; and Jalīl Kamāl al-Dīn in Al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi al-Ḥadīth wa Rūḥ al-ʿAṣr, p.160. Compare with I. Ismāʿīl's assessment of it where he says that it is conventional, Al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi al-Muʿāṣir, Qaḍāyāhu wa Ẓawāhiruhu 'l-Fanniyyah wa 'l-Maʿnawiyyah, Cairo, 1967, p.71.

29. See for example his poems "Munāghāt Laila", "al-Ṭauq", and "Mauṭini" in Al-Rabīʿ, pp.181-3, 224-6 and 235 respectively.

30. Ittijāhāt, p.412.

31. Ibid., pp.414-5.

32. For more details on the modern muwashshah or musammaṭ, see ibid., pp.412-9; see also ʿAbdullah al-Ṭayib, Al-Murshid ilā Ashʿār al-ʿArab wa Sināʿatihā, Cairo, 1955, I, 10-22.

33. On the lack of freedom in this form see ibid., pp.10-12. Al-Ṭayib, however, is writing with comparison to the two hemistich form which he finds much more conducive to freedom than the musammaṭ. He is right in this, but the fact that the two hemistich form furnishes another type of restriction and limitation must not elude the critic.

34. Words and Poetry, p.35; see also al-Ṭayib, op.cit., p.11.

35. Rylands, op.cit., pp.38-9.

36. This date is given by Anwar al-Jundi in his book Al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi 'l-Muʿāṣir, p.562.

37. Poetry, its Music and Meaning, London, 1932, p.37.

38. It is strange that Ibrāhīm Anīs does not analyse this point when he discusses blank verse in Arabic, but rather limits his discussion to the insistence on the necessity of rhyme in Arabic without even giving convincing reasons for this; see Mūsīqā 'l-Shiʿr, pp.292-3. The same omission is noticed also in ʿIzziddin Ismāʿīl's book, op.cit., pp.59-60. N. al-Malāʾikah, also insists on the necessity of the rhyme, Qaḍāyā, pp.160-1, but, instead of regarding rhyme more necessary in the two hemistich form says that it is more necessary in free verse because "it is a poetry which already lacks some of the musical aspects of the customary two hemistich verse. The fixed length of the Khalilian Arabic hemistich helps to pick up the musical note and gives the poem a strong, highly defined rhythm so that it lessens the necessity for a strong resonant rhyme which rings at the end of the hemistich so that no one can ignore it."

ibid., p.162. This is purely mental reasoning, for the very definiteness of the music of the two hemistich line requires a matching definiteness of the rhyme. See also Malā'ikah's introduction to her diwan Shajaratu 'l-Qamar, Beirut, 1968, p.17; see also al-Ṭayib's argument against blank verse in Arabic, op.cit., pp.22-5.

39. Apollo, November 1932, p.227; see also above p.527.

40. Y. ʿIzziddīn, Fi 'l-Adab al-ʿArabi 'l-Hadīth, Baghdad, 1967, pp.253-4; quoted by him from Al-Ḥurriyyah magazine, July 15th, 1924.

41. See his chapter "Nash'at al-Shi'r al-Ḥurr fi 'l-ʿIrāq", ibid., pp. 233-90, where all these examples are collected. On al-band see below pp.784-94. M. al-Hāshimi seems to have started publishing old bands in 1922 in his magazine Al-Yaqīn (Baghdad), which might have directed attention to this genre. On this see ibid., pp.258-9.

42. See the preface to Rūmyū wa Julyait, Cairo, 1946, p.3.

43. Al-Risālah, No.625, June 25th, 1945, p.680.

44. Ibid.

45. Al-Risālah, No.628, July 16th, 1945, p.752.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Al-Adīb, October, 1946, p.25.

49. Dated 30th of May, 1969, and sent from Beirut, Lebanon.

50. See Ibn Rashīq, Al-ʿUmdah, Vol.I, 136-7, where he paraphrases al-Jawhari's interesting ideas on Arabic metres; in modern times M. Diyāb mentioned them also, op.cit., p.157. For N. al-Malā'ikah's discussion of them see Qadāyā, pp.65-8. Where it is possible, it is always advisable to stick to an older usage if it is appropriate.

51. Rasā'il min London, Alexandria, [1956?], pp.109-10.

52. Ibid.

53. For a single example of tadwīr in al-khafīf, see N. al-Malā'ikah's poem "Al-Baʿth", Shajaratu 'l-Qamar, pp.150-7 where she has twenty-four verses with enjambment in this poem of thirty-six verses; she herself commented on her frequent use of tadwīr in her poems in al-khafīf, see her introduction, ibid., pp.10 and 12.

54. See a summary of this introduction in Shiʿr No.31-32, Winter-Spring, 1964, pp.121-3.

55. Quoted by Y.H. Bakkār, "Nāzik al-Malā'ikah wa Bidāyat al-Shiʿr al-Ḥurr", Al-Aqlām, March, 1965, pp.109-10; see also G. Shukri's article "Ṣirāʿ al-Mutanāqiḍāt fī Ṣufūf al-Shiʿr al-Ḥadīth", Hiwār, No.20, January-February, 1966, pp.74-92, in which he strangely gives a great historical importance to L. ʿAwad's experiment, see pp.74-7 et passim; see also a rejoinder by Hādi Ṭuʿmah, "Al-Tafʿīlah... Bidʿah li Tabdīd fann al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi", Al-Aqlām, September, 1966, pp.114-141 in which he violently rejects this claim.

56. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Dujaili, Al-Band fi 'l-Adab al-ʿArabi, Tārīkhuhu wa Nusūsuh, Baghdad, 1959, p. ؟

57. Al-Dujaili, ibid., p. ؟ declares that despite his long research on the subject (he says on p. ظ that it took him eight years), he could find no reference to the origin and beginning of al-band.

58. N. al-Malā'ikah, Qadāyā, p.167 et seq., Muṣṭafa Jamāl al-Dīn, "Al-Band wa 'l-Shiʿr al-Ḥurr", Al-Aqlām magazine, February, 1965, p.120 et seq.

59. See al-Dujaili, Al-Band, p. ى, for a quotation from al-Zahāwi originally quoted by Muḥammad al-Hāshimi.

60. Ibid., pp. ف and ل

61. Ibid., p. غ ; see also pp. ز , ش and ص, where similar comments are repeated.

62. See his preface to his book **Al-Band.**

63. See ibid., p. ج for al-Dujaili's description of his difficulties in collecting his bands.

64. Ibid., pp. ج and ظ. On p. ظ he says that most of those who memorized these bands are from the common people and the possibility of their making many mistakes is great.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid., p. غ.

67. Al-Dujaili mentions on p. ض that many band writers came from these places. According to him they went to al-Najaf to study and eventually returned to their own territories.

68. See al-Dujaili, ; **ibid.**, pp. ت and ث. On p. ث he says that some band writers were illiterate; see also M. Jamāl al-Dīn, op.cit., p. 124.

69. See her chapter, "Al-Band wa Makānuhu min al-Shi'r al-'Arabi", Qaḍāyā, pp. 167-79.

70. Op.cit.

71. See for example al-Dujaili's comments on this and his elevation of al-band over free verse, in Al-Band, p. ل ; for although al-Dujaili's collection and part of his research is very valuable, his evaluation of al-band is rather hazy; see also 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Hilāli, "Al-Band fi 'l-Adab al-'Irāqi", Al-Aqlām, November, 1964, where he re-asserts Malā'ikah's ideas, pp. 73-80; see also another article by Ḥusain Nassār entitled "Al-Taf'īlah fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi", Al-Aqlām, ibid., p. 43 where he does the same.

72. Al-Dujaili, Al-Band, p. 34.

73. The date of his death is not known, but he is included in Anīs al-Khāṭir wa Jalīs al-Musāfir, an anthology collected by al-Shaikh Yūsuf al-Baḥrāni who himself died in 1186; see al-Dujaili, Al-Band, p. 19 n.

74. See ibid., p. 26, his band marked ض

75. See for example ibid., his bands marked ك and ط on p. 22.

76. These are many; see for example his band marked ن on p. 23 and his band marked ف on p. 24, etc. It is strange that Jamāl al-Dīn in his discussion of his bands overlooked Bālīl's diverse use of the two metres but hinted that he wrote bands just in al-ramal. He does mention Bālīl's bands which are published in al-Dujaili's collection and which contain many bands in hazaj or which mix the two metres, without pointing out this fact; see op.cit., p. 123.

77. Al-Dujaili, Al-Band, p. 23, the band marked ع ; see also another good example of a band in ramal by him, in Jamāl al-Dīn, loc.cit.

78. Ibid., p. 9.

79. There seems to be a mistake in Dujaili's text where he quotes the word nūrun نـــور instead of anwara انـور. However, several things point to the word anwara انور instead. Firstly the meaning is more appropriate, for it is more apt to say that thankful praise shone in his green tent rather than saying that thankful praise is a light in his green tent, because of the transient nature of the action of giving thankful praise. Secondly anwara انور fits with the rhyme endings before and after. Thirdly, it also fits with the metre whereas nūrun نـــور breaks it completely. Al-Dujaili's book has many printing mistakes.

80. On al-kharm see Ibn Rashīq al-Qairawāni, Al-'Umdah fī Mahāsin al-Shi'r wa Ādābihi wa Naqdih, where he gives a clear account of this, I, 140-1; see also M.A. Khafāji, Fann al-Shi'r, 'Arūd al-Shi'r al-'Arabi wa Qawāfīh, two volumes, Cairo, 1949, 1950, I, 51.

81. Al-Dujaili, Al-Band, p.53.

82. Qadāyā, pp.172-5.

83. In his article, op.cit.

84. Ibid., pp.127-9.

85. Qadāyā, pp.171.

86. Ibid., pp.172-3.

87. Unshūdat al-Matar, p.120.

88. Ibid., p.86.

89. Qadāyā, pp.171-2.

90. Al-Dujaili, Al-Band, p.68.

91. For two examples see his band marked ن on p.23 and his band marked ح on p.21 where several changes between the metres take place.

92. Such as, for example, Bālīl's bands marked هـ and ل on pp.21 and 22 respectively.

93. Qadāyā, p.170.

94. Op.cit., pp.124-7. For al-khazm see Ibn Rashīq, op.cit., pp.141-3. The nearest translation of al-khazm in English prosody would be the hypermetric, which means to have a redundant syllable in the verse. See also Khafaji, op.cit., I, 46-8.

95. Al-Dujaili, Al-Band, p.67.

96. Al-Dujaili, ibid., pp.19-20 n. quotes this from Anīs al-Khātir.

97. Ibid., p.120.

98. Ibid., pp. ف and غ .

99. See ibid., p. ى where al-Zahāwi is quoted as having asserted this. Al-Dujaili himself did research on the subject and came to the same conclusion. However, he did not describe the Persian version of al-band clearly. See ibid., pp. ض ـــ ذ On p. ذ he describes a kind of "rhymed prose /N.B. the word 'prose'/ written in the metre of mafā'īlun and ending after about ten lines with the rhyme را ". Since al-hazaj metre, which is a repetition of mafā'īlun four times to the Classical two hemistich verse in Arabic, is known to be the

main metre used in al-band (see al-Malā'ikah, op.cit., p.167) and since it is also found in Persian prosody, eight feet to the verse, (see Ṣ. Khulūṣi, Fann al-Taqṭī' al-Shi'ri wa 'l-Qāfiyah, Baghdad, 1963, Vol.I, 98) the idea that the Iraqians took it from the Persians is plausible. It is reinforced by the fact that the را is also found in the Arabic bands at the ends of paragraphs or even sometimes in the middle of a paragraph, although some other letters, one notices, are also used occasionally; see Dujaili's Al-Band, pp.11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 for examples of the use of ما at the end of the bands; see also ibid., pp.54, 55, 56 and 57 for the use of حا ; etc. These are always in the accusative.

100. Ibid., p. ن

101. Ibid., pp.49-50 n.

102. Qadāyā, p.170; see also p.175. But there are several instances in which al-band seems to be connected with prose, as in the above example in foot-note 99. Al-hazaj metre itself seems to have become connected in Iraq with prose or prosaic constructions. Khulūṣi alludes to it as a metre regarded by some poets to be less elevated than other metres, op.cit., p.97. He quotes the Najafi poet M.R. al-Shabībi in this verse:

ونثرته هزجا وانثل شاعـــــر لا يستجيد الشعر حتى ينظـــــم

p.98. The allusion by al-Shabībi to hazaj as being prosaic is very significant. See also al-Hilāli's article, op.cit., p.76 for quotations from other writers.

103. Most bands are very prosaic, despite their crowded embellishments. They seem, moreover, to have degenerated in time, as a glance on the later bands in al-Dujaili's collection shows. For a single example see a band written by a modern writer called Ṣāhib Dhahab (b.1347 A.H.), ibid., pp.160-1. Al-Dujaili himself recognises the general banality of bands (see p.ض of his book), although he vacillates in his opinion at times.

104. The early attempt, attributed to the linguist Ibn Duraid al-Azdi, at writing a literary piece of similar composition in al-rajaz metre is very interesting. Al-Dujaili quotes it on p. م , but rejects M. al-Hāshimi's suggestion that this piece is a band. Although it certainly was not meant to be one, for bands were not known at that time, it does have the same prosaic composition, and the same conversational tone as well as the same play in the number of feet 3, 3, 8, 2, 2, 3, 9 (this line seems to have a slight prosodical mistake at the beginning), 8, 3, 3, 7, 4, and 8. Al-Bāqillani quotes a much shorter and slightly different version of it without naming the writer, and regards it as having deviated from metre, for, in his opinion, verse is that "whose parts are similar in length and vocalisation"; see I'jāz al-Qur'ān, p.84. Ibn al-'Imād quotes a similar example supposed to have been written by al-Ma'arri:

" اصلحك الله وابقاك ،لقد كان من الواجب ان تأتينا اليوم الى منزلنا الخالي لكي تحدث عهدا بك يا زين الاخلاء ، فما مثلك من ضيّع عهدا او غفل " .

and says, (quoting Ibn Khillikān) that this piece was shown to Abū 'l-'Izz Muẓaffar al-'Ailāni, the prosodist, who said it belonged to al-rajaz al-majzū', thus not recognising its prosaic qualities, and re-wrote it in hemistichs. This is interesting because it shows again that the order of the two hemistich verse was synonymous with

poetry; see Shadharāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār Man Dhahab, Cairo, 1351 A.H., V, 111-2.

Al-Ma'arri, however, when he speaks about this kind of writing does not refer to this quotation attributed to him, but quotes another example by some later writers "muḥdathūn", (quoted here in two hemistich form as they have done, for technical reasons):

ابا بكـــــر لقـــد جـــاءتـــ ... ك من يحيى بن منصـــــــو
ر الكأس فخذهـــــــا منـــ ... ه صرفا غير ممـــــــــــزو
جة جنّـــــــــــــــــــ ... بك الله ابا بكر من الســـــو

This technique of leaving a word unfinished in a verse, al-Ma'arri says, is called "ighrām" by later savants; see Al-Fuṣūl wa 'l-Ghāyāt fī Tamjīd Allāh wā 'l-Mawā'iz, ed. by M.H. al-Zanāti, Cairo, 1938, Vol.I, 446-7.

These examples from Classical times remain the earliest we have of prosaic literary pieces written in metre, as well as the earliest examples of metrical compositions based on the free repetition of one foot. An example from the piece attributed to Ibn Duraid is the following where the feet are 3, 3, 8, 2, 2, 3,:

رب اخ كنت به مغتبطا ، اشد كفي بعرى صحبته ، تمسكا مني بالود ولا
احسبه يغير العهد ولا يحول عنه ابدا ، ما حل روحي جسدي ، فانقلب
العهد به ، فعدت ان اصلح ما افسده .

However, these attempts must be regarded as mere exercises of metrical ability, that have nothing to do with poetry, for their prosaic nature is undeniable.

105. On this see N. al-Malā'ikah, Shi'r 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā, pp.203 and 206; see also A. al-Ahwāni, Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk, p.180; J. Rikābi, however, strangely regards it as a liberation of form, Fi 'l-Adab al-Andalusi, p.308.

106. 'Awaḍ al-Karīm strangely suggests that al-muwashshahāt could have been developed to embody both narrative and dramatic poetry. In dramatic poetry, the kharjah, written usually in the vernacular, could have been utilised, in his opinion, for the dramatic dialogue; see Fann al-Tawshīh, p.167. The idea of this lyrical, elaborate and restricted form of verse being used in dramatic or even narrative poetry cannot possibly be entertained.

107. 'Awaḍ al-Karīm, however, insists that the muwashshah is the greatest attempt in the history of Arabic poetry, old and new, to rebel against the traditional metres; see ibid., pp.66 and 167; several other writers entertain the idea that this art form was an intended liberation of Arabic metres; see A. Ḥammoudah, op.cit., p.45; Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā 'l-Shi'r, p.222; and other writers.

108. However, just as al-Dujaili preferred the band to modern free verse, so also did several writers with al-muwashshah. See 'Awaḍ al-Karīm, op.cit., p.168; 'Abd al-Karīm al-Yāfi, Dirāsāt Fanniyyah fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi, Damascus, 1963, p.165, where he says that the muwashshahāt were richer, deeper and wider /in theme/, a very strange statement; see also the comment of Sa'd Da'bīs, "Ahammiyat Dirāsat al-Muwashshaḥāt fi 'l-'Aṣr al-Ḥadīth", Al-Aqlām, July, 1968, pp.84-8.

109. Qadāyā, pp.21-2 and 21 n.

110. See his comment in Al-Ādāb, June, 1954, p.69.

111. See the arguments in Al-Ādāb; ibid.; February, 1954, pp.49-50, a comment by Ṣāliḥ Kubbah; ibid., April, 1954, a comment by K.J. [Kāẓim Jawād?], p.69; ibid., May, 1954, comment by Jalāl al-Khayyāṭ, p.58; ibid., July, 1954, comment by Kāẓim Jawād, p.57. These early comments were not the last, for the controversy still goes on; see Al-Aqlām, March, 1965, the article by Yūsuf Ḥusain Bakkār, pp.108-11 entitled "Nāzik al-Malā'ikah wa Bidāyat al-Shi'r al-Ḥurr" in which he tries to prove that she was not the first poet to write a free poem; etc.

112. Azhār wa Asāṭīr, Beirut, n.d., p.140.

113. Shaẓāyā wa Ramād, second edition, Beirut, 1959, p.122.

114. Loc.cit.

115. Nāzik herself has no poems in this metre in 'Āshiqatu 'l-Lail, her first diwan; for another example 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā does not use this metre in any of his volumes of verse.

116. He himself realised this; see his comment, loc.cit., see also the comment of Kāẓim Jawād, loc.cit.

117. Azhār wa Asāṭīr, pp.29-40.

118. In Al-Nafīr paper, November, 1948.

119. K. Jawād, loc.cit., recognised this. He was one of the poets who benefited by al-Sayyāb's liberation of al-kāmil metre.

120. M. 'Abbūd early recognised N. al-Malā'ikah's poetic gift; see his essay on her first diwan, 'Āshiqatu 'l-Lail, in Mujaddidūn wa Mujtarrūn, pp.185-97.

121. See 'Abbūd, Mujaddidūn, p.186, where he says that N. al-Malā'ikah broke the record for a poetry full of tears and complaint.

122. See above pp.172-3; see chapter IV on Romanticism, where this is discussed in several places.

123. For a few examples from her second diwan, Shaẓāyā, see as examples of her involvement with the depressing conditions of life around her such poems as "Al-Kūlīrā", pp.121-4, "Al-Ufwān", pp.60-6, "Linakun Asdiqā'", pp.125-31, "Yūtūpiā fi 'l-Jibāl", pp.135-41 and several others. Some poems, though originally personal, have a metaphysical approach rather mature for her age at the time, stemming probably from her deeply intuitive realisation of the major evils in life which include, as her poems indicate, the treachery of people we love and the banality, cruelty and destructiveness which dominate life, either openly or lurking behind the façade of people's outer behaviour. She is a very interesting poet, although her poetry is either too personal or too generalised to suit the particular mood in which the Arab people are living now. However, despite her teacher Gibrān's wider dimensions of experience and approach, her best poems, one feels, are more capable of permanent survival than his.

124. See Jalīl Kamāl al-Dīn, Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth wa Rūḥ al-'Aṣr, pp. 161 and 174; see also Muḥyi al-Dīn Ismā'īl, "Malamiḥ min al-Shi'r al-'Irāqi al-Ḥadīth", Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.56; Khālidah Sa'īd, however, recognised her capacity, in certain poems, to combine the personal and the 'communal'; see her essay on her entitled "Al-Inkifā' ila 'l-Nafs", Al-Baḥth 'an al-Judhūr, Beirut, 1960, p.43.

125. See above, pp.232-4,249, 349, 403, 474, 512 et passim.

126. Ṣaidah's discussion of this controversy in Egypt is well justified; see his book, Adabunā wa Udabā'unā fi 'l-Mahājir al-Amīrkiyyah, pp.195-223; see also 'Azīz Abāẓah's extemporised speech at the celebration given in honour of Ṣaidah in Cairo 1956 as paraphrased in Al-Adīb, May, 1956, pp.73-4; also a paraphrasing of his lecture in Taṭwān, Morocco, in 1958, ibid., January, 1958, pp.80-1.

127. The isolated and unsuccessful experiments of well known poets like Abū 'l-'Atāhiyah (see Ibn Qutaibah, Al-Shi'r wa 'l-Shu'arā', ed. by J. de Geoje, Leiden, 1904, p.497) and of such adventurers as Razīn al-'Arūḍi (d.247 A.H.); (see on his innovations Yāqūt al-Ḥamawi, Irshād al-Arīb Ilā Ma'rifat al-Adīb, known as Mu'jam al-Udabā', ed. by D.S. Margoliouth, Cairo, 1927, Vol.IV, 209-10, and Vol.VI, 16-7.) are common knowledge. See also a list of new metres invented but never seriously explored in Khafāji Fann al-Shi'r, I, 66-7, etc.

128. Khafāji's book on Abū Shādi, entitled Rā'id al-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth has been mentioned above; see also the articles on him by al-Shāyib and al-Saḥarti in Al-Shafaq al-Bāki and other references. For Quṭub's writings on al-'Aqqād see Mandūr's argument in Mīzān, pp.103-8, and other references.

129. Mīzān, p.75; see also above p.747.

130. See above chapter V.

131. Several publishers in Beirut, including Bashīr al-Dā'ūq of Dār al-Ṭalī'ah, Suhail Idrīs of Dār al-Ādāb (and editor of Al-Ādāb magazine) and Bahīj 'Uthmān of Dār al-'Ilm li 'l-Malāyīn, told the present writer about the great consumption of books by the Iraqis. Zaki Mubārak, who sojourned in Baghdad in 1937, it is surely remembered (see above p. 349), extolled the praises of the Iraqians in their open-minded attitude towards Egyptian and other Arab literary contribution, as well as in their love of reading and general literary activity.

132. Poetry, its Music and Meaning, p.15.

133. Form, not metre. Metres have long been described as catering each to definite themes; see 'Abdullah al-Ṭayib's discussion on these, op.cit., pp.74-485. Al-Ṭayib has many plausible points, but practice has shown that poets write in any metre they happen to choose for one reason or another. Metres, for example happen to be in vogue in a certain period, e.g. al-kāmil in the early fifties, and al-khabab and al-rajaz from the mid-fifties till the present day, and poems of all kinds were written in them. Other artistic reasons exist. See an article written on this by Aḥmad Nāṣīf al-Janābi entitled "Mūsīqā 'l-Shi'r, hal lahā Silah bi Mauḍū'āt al-Shi'r wa Aghrāḍih ?", Al-Aqlām, January, 1964, pp.125-32.

134. P.10.

135. Ibid., pp.10-11.

136. It is strange that Ihasān 'Abbās, who is a well-known modern critic, writing in 1952, had not yet seen the contradiction in Nāzik's definition. He agrees that she is right because the two hemistich form has to resort to "poetic crutches" to fill the feet of the metre. See Al-Thaqāfah magazine, No.722, November 10th, 1952, p.16. However, he contradicts himself on p.17 saying that a poet exploits the poetic crutches, meaning that he never allows them to over-ride him.

137. Such as ʿAbbās, as has been mentioned in foot-note 136. See also J.I. Jabrā, Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.1; and many others.

138. A quotation from C.M. Bowra would be appropriate here. Discussing the Classical concept of form he says: "It would not be entirely untrue to say that the Classical conception both of rhymes and of regular verses is that the poet should be able to say what he has to say in any form." The Creative Experiment, London, 1949, p.21.

139. This attribute has pre-occupied the minds of several Classical savants; for a single example see Ibn Rashīq's discussion on conciseness and condensation in poetry, Al-ʿUmdah, Vol.I, 250-7; see also his interesting chapter on padding where he states that padding is often resorted to in order to achieve a correct metrical structure, ibid., Vol.II, 69-72; N.B. his enumeration of words used as crutches in poetry, p.71. A modern critic, however, can point out at once how these very words are still used as padding articles in free verse, and might be able to add to the list.

140. The statement of al-Jāḥiẓ demonstrates this very well, "أجود الكلام ما رأيته متلائم الأجزاء ، سهل المخارج ، فتعلم بذلك انه افرغ افراغا وسبك سبكا واحدا فهو يجرى على اللسان كما يجرى الدهان." quoted, ibid., Vol.I, 257.

141. See Ibn Rashīq's comment on al-Mutanabbi's resort to this, Al-ʿUmdah, Vol.II, 71.

142. Al-Ādāb, June, 1954, p.69.

143. K.J. in ibid., April 1954, p.69 n.

144. Ibid., p.69.

145. Ibid.

146. N. al-Malāʾikah, writing in 1954, describes the development of free verse as widening rapidly like a storm; see Qadāyā, p.34.

147. Ibid., p.51.

148. See ibid., pp.35-48, her chapter entitled "Al-Judhūr al-Ijtimāʿiyyah li ʾl-Shiʿr al-Ḥurr".

149. Op.cit., p.2.

150. Ibid., p.3.

151. See her chapter, op.cit.

152. On these see Bowra, op.cit., p.21.

153. See an article by Adūnīs, entitled "Muḥāwalah fī Taʿrīf al-Shiʿr al-Ḥadīth" Shiʿr, No.11, Summer, 1959, p.83.

154. See above pp.106-7, the discussion on Shauqi's manipulation of the two hemistich form.

155. Shiʿr magazine, No.2, Spring, 1957, p.97, from his lecture "Mustaqbal al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi fī Lubnān".

156. Shiʿr, No.24, Autumn, 1962, p.140.

157. Al-Majallah, No.81, September, 1963, p.27.

158. Ibid., No.57, October, 1961, p.28.

159. For I. Izziddīn's term "al-shiʿr al-jadīd" see his book Al-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi ʾl-Muʿāṣir, p.62. For I. al-Amīn's term "shiʿr al-tafʿīlah", see his book Nazariyyat al-Fann al-Mutajaddid, Cairo, 1964, p.15, et passim.

160. Loc.cit.

161. Ibid., pp.97-8.

162. For the concept of ideological violence, the present writer is indebted to Nadīm al-Bīṭār's magnificent discussion of violence in revolutions in his book Al-Idẅūlūgiyyah al-Inqilābiyyah, Beirut, 1964; see especially p.720.

163. The Creative Experiment, p.6.

164. Op.cit., pp.98-9.

165. "Muḥāwalah fī Ta'rīf al-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth", Shi'r, No.11, Summer, 1959, pp.79-80.

166. Ibid., p.80.

167. Ibid., 81.

168. Ibid.

169. Ibid.

170. Ibid., p.83.

171. On this problem see Bowra, The Creative Experiment, pp.21-3.

172. See ibid., pp.10-1.

173. Op.cit., pp.84-5.

174. Ibid., pp.88-9.

175. Ibid., p.90.

SECTION 4: COMMITTED AND PLATFORM POETRY

(i) Committed Poetry: Al-Iltizām

It was in the pages of Al-Ādāb magazine (founded at the beginning of 1953) that the call for committed literature found its greatest support in the fifties, but many other magazines and newspapers also participated. This call had started much earlier in the century, prompted mainly, not by the natural social function of Arabic poetry which moved within a traditional social framework,* but by modern socio-political convictions. The Egyptian writer and thinker, Salāmah Mūsa (1887-1958) was a socialist who tried to promote the idea of a literature for the people and of the people. His achievement as a writer, thinker, and educator is beyond the scope of this work,[1] but he must be remembered here as probably the first writer to raise the question from a socialist point of view of mass communication and the necessity to write in the language of the people. Hence, he attacked many of the literary conventions that dominated the literary field, denouncing rhetoric and the literature of kings and princes[2] and advocating the use of a language nearer to that of the people.[3] Moreover, his promotion of the idea of sincerity in literature and of a realistic approach to the problems of society[4] was sustained throughout the many decades in which he wrote. However, it was in the fifties, just before he died, that his activity, encouraged by the 1952 Revolution in

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* Only a few decades earlier there would have been no question of to whom the poet and man of letters should write. The idea of eliticism had vanished by the beginning of the twentieth century and the poet found himself guided by a strong living tradition to direct his voice to a fairly large audience of poetry. But the 'people' whom the poet addressed were not the proletariat but the national community, or, to be more precise, the audience of poetry who combined a traditional love of poetry to a newly acquired concern for national problems. The poetry of the earlier decades of this century had, therefore, social aims and depended on the social medium for its legitimacy but within a traditional social framework. It was, of course, the Romantics and after them the Symbolists who introduced a new trend. The latter especially helped to propagate elitist ideas concerning poetry in their arguments in the thirties and forties about 'pure poetry' and 'art for art's sake', as has been discussed in the chapter on Symbolism.

Egypt, seemed to multiply, and his influence, on a pan Arabic scale, permeated a far greater audience.[5]

In Lebanon the influence of the socialist writer 'Umar Fākhūri made itself felt in the forties with the publication of his two books, Al-Fusūl al-Arba'ah (1941) and Adīb fi 'l-Sūq (1944). The insistence on sincerity in literature is stressed in these books, and in the second the media of the writer is fully discussed and Fākhūri attacked the literature of ivory towers, a phrase which came to be commonly used in the fifties.[6]

But more influential than him for the promotion of left-wing ideas of commitment in the fifties was the Lebanese writer, educator, story writer, critic and literary historian, Ra'īf al-Khouri (1912-1967). A Classicist and a modern, his name shone early in the forties with the publication of his book Al-Fikr al-'Arabi 'l-Hadīth wa Athar al-Thaurah al-Firansiyyah fī Tawjīhihi 'l-Siyāsi wa 'l-Ijtimā'i, (1943), which has been quoted several times in this work, as well as with his articles on literature. He was a liberal socialist who was able, amidst the many currents of thought and the many conflicting pressures, to remain loyal to his first principles. In 1942 he wrote saying that it is the writer who re-shapes (he says engineers) the spirit of man, but he must be free and his ideas must not be pre-moulded for him.[7] He never changed this point of view, and despite his belief in a socialist structure for society and in a socialist attitude towards the role of writers and critics, he did not hesitate to criticise Soviet censorship on writers in the Soviet Union.[8] This was a sign of great independence on the part of this critic at a time when the Soviet Union represented a great moral force to Arab socialists everywhere. One can say about him that he, with the towering figure of Marūn 'Abbūd at his side, was able to found a front of critical dignity and integrity in Lebanon, exerting a real moral influence on literary thinking and critical attitudes. His role in promoting the ideas of committed

literature was central in the fifties. For him the writer is socially responsible.[9] Those writers who live in ivory towers, writing on subjects that are separated from life (he is speaking here in particular about the idea of 'pure poetry'), draw the curtains over the facts of Imperialism, over the complaints of the workers and peasants, and submerge the struggle of people for democracy, liberty and independence. They are, therefore, socially related in a negative sense, i.e. in an anti-social sense. They are escapists.[10] Discussing the relationship between politics and literature, he asserted that politics is a theme of great interest to people. "The Arab writer is committed in this period of Arab national revival to have, consciously and deliberately, a political meaning in his writings."[11] This need not be direct, but should be implied. In his opinion, this 'political' meaning can be imbued even in a love poem with the spirit of challenge and strength it permeates, as opposed to that of despair and debility.[12] His lecture "The Man of Letters Writes for the Masses" in answer to Ṭāhā Ḥusain's lecture "The Man of Letters Writes for the Elite"[13] rang in the middle of the fifties with a resounding cry, arousing the spirit and gaining the support of thousands of readers. "Literature," he said, "is an individual act of creation using social, not metaphysical material, a material which stems from the overflowing life of the people."[14] The debate, which was organized by the UNESCO at Beirut in 1955 took on great dimensions and produced considerable intellectual activity.[15] It might well be regarded as the most important literary debate in the fifties.

Like most writers who promote the idea of a literature committed to the people, Ra'īf al-Khouri advocated simplicity and clarity of language.[16] His own style conformed to these requirements, and he was, throughout his career, able to harmonise theory with practice, an achievement made easy for him because of his intellectual integrity. Although he was not able

to feel much sympathy with advanced experiments in modern poetry,[17] he remains one of the brave, courageous writers who guided the spirit of the fifties.[18]

Other writers in Syria and Lebanon also participated in promoting the ideas of a committed literature, based on Marxist principles. As early as 1950 Shihādah al-Khouri published his well-known book Al-Adab fi 'l-Maidān in Damascus, in which he advocated, with strength and infective conviction, the principles of socially committed literature, stemming from Marxist theories on the subject. Literature should enter the arena of social struggle and should commit itself to the oppressed masses - the peasants and workers-in order to be a weapon for them with which they can fight for their rights and by means of which they can regain faith in their own humanity.[19] The term "neo-Realism" found expression in this work.

Najm, in his valuable record of the development of literary theory in the Arab world between 1860-1960 describes the formation in 1954 of "Rābitat al-Kuttāb al-Sūriyyīn", a group of socialist writers and poets who published several books of short stories and some volumes of poetry among which was the diwan of the socialist poet, Shauqi Baghdādi, Akthar min Qalb Wāhid, Damascus, 1955. The activities of this Union of Writers were suppressed with the national flux which came about in 1958 when the Syrio-Egyptian unity was effected.

In Iraq, the socialist poets were actively writing poetry which had a social context , 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyāti, Kāẓim Jawād, al-Sayyāb, and several others. Their examples were the socialist foreign poets who had already gained world fame: Federico Garcia Lorca, Nazim Hikmat, Mayakovsky, Pablo Neruda, Aragon. As poets, their socialist concepts were immediately applied in their poetry. Al-Bayyāti can well be regarded as the most important representative of the neo-Realism in Iraq, and perhaps in the Arab world, for he persevered in producing volumes of poetry which

exhibited dedication, and an experimental spirit, but which suffered from a certain amount of monotony. Al-Sayyāb, whose long poems Al-Mūmis al-'Amyā' and Al-Aslihah wa 'l-Atfāl exemplified the concepts of socialist dedication, turned later to another kind of commitment in which the condition of man in the Arab world pre-occupied his thoughts stemming from his own experience and consciousness of it rather than from a kind of deliberate choice of a socialist theme. Despite the high quality of Al-Mūmis, much of his other work remains superior to it.

By the middle of the fifties the principles of Social Realism in literature had become well propagated among readers.[20] Their main themes were that writers should concentrate on the portrayal of real life. This portrayal includes the social struggle between the classes, a struggle in which the oppressed were always the heroes. The author's outlook must not stem from metaphysical concepts, but must depend rather on clear logical scientific basis. Form and content are united and interdependent. A spirit of optimism and faith, of strength and determination, should permeate these writings, for the struggle of the masses should be supported and given its victorious meaning in literature.* "The author's point of view", to use E. Wilson's words, "must 'be that of the vanguard of the proletariat'".[21]

In 1955 the Egyptian Mahmūd Amīn al-'Ālim and 'Abd al-'Azīm Anīs published in Beirut an important book on theoretical and practical criticism based on Marxist concepts. Answering the question "What is social Realism?" Anīs says that it is not the reality of a writer's personal experience. The writer must understand his experience through

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* To give a single example, Ḥusain Murawwah, a Lebanese socialist writer, says in his discussion of the poetry of Khalīl Ḥāwi "How can we accept that he breathes into ... our generation the 'enchantment' of despair ... Does our poet think that this can create life from the wasteland? Or would he say that 'this is my experience, and it is nobody's business if I should react to a certain experience..'"[22]

the general, not the individual, reality.[23] This is why an awareness of these problems is essential to the artist.[24] In a work of art the approach is of paramount importance, for it must imply and emphasise the right kind of social morality[25] for the readers. It is interesting to see how the writers attack and reject Existentialism, that "devastating individualistic philosophy which denies the objective truth of human reality,[26] which has an emotional attitude to the world, to man and to history. It is a process of alienation ... not an act of commitment and a feeling of a true human responsibility."[27] Existentialist ideas on social commitment are rejected. "They are raw and immature", for the human responsibility should be a conscious knowledge of the objective problems of the world and not an emotional, hazy approach.[28] Existentialism is a defeatist, reactionary movement. It is a clear path, not between left and right as its protagonists claim, but is a path backward into reaction and defeat.[29]

The work of art must achieve a complete unity between form and content, an organic unity ... in which the images grow harmoniously into each other from within the work of art until they arrive at the completion of the work.[30] In a novel, the heroes should take a stand towards things and events,[31] and the solution of their problems should depend, not on an individual but on a general political motivation.[32] As for the conflict in the literary field in Egypt, the battle is not between old and new but between the neo-Realists and their enemies.[33] Concerning the basic attitude of authors, the writers declare that anger alone is not enough, and moreover constitutes a danger, for "an anger which is not accompanied by hope undoubtedly leads to despair".[34] Among the authors whom they attack in this book is T.S. Eliot who is described as "One of the biggest reactionary heads in modern thought."[35] Their argument is presented with force and confidence, but as in much ideological thinking, dogma plays a good part in their discussion and their attempt at applying their principles

to a work of art often lowers their aesthetic judgment.[36]

There are several other writers on social Realism. The Lebanese Ḥusain Murawwah who had written the introduction to Fi 'l-Thaqāfah al-Misriyyah published his own book, Qadāyā Adabiyyah, in 1956, in Cairo. In this book he spoke, among other things, of progressive and reactionary writers. A writer is a progressive when he takes into account the movement of history and the rise of the new developing forces whose conflict with the "decaying" class is inevitable.[37] 'Ali Sa'd, also a Lebanese, participated to some extent in the call for commitment,[38] and so did Muḥammad Mufīd al-Shūbāshi[39] in Egypt. As for Muḥammad Mandūr, however, despite his assertion that he had become a social Realist,[40] he remained a liberal at heart in his poetic criticism. In his book Qadāyā Jadīdah fī Adabina 'l-Hadīth there is nothing of the stern, ideological approach of Murawwah for example, in his book of practical criticism, Dirāsāt Naqdiyyah fī Dau' al-Manhaj al-Wāqi'i, Beirut, 1965.[41]

The development of the principles of social Realism in critics, as well as of those of the Sartrian ideas of commitment, which will be discussed presently, found an echo in the needs of the era for all kinds of weapons to help with the vital process of reconstruction and spiritual atonement. But the fifties were not a fertile ground for the implementation of socialist ideas on a popular scale, for they must be remembered as the peak of Arab nationalism in modern times when there was voiced the strongest verbal expression of the involvement of the people and their spokesmen in a revival based on nationalism. Thus the ideas of a committed literature were unhesitatingly adopted by nationalist writers.[42] This adoption must not be seen as a contradiction or inversion of principles, but as a natural resort on the part of the poets and writers involved to utilise everything in their hands for the sake of progress.[43] Arab nationalism in the fifties was a spontaneous reality. The real

schism, therefore, took place not between the Socialists and the Nationalists who had unwittingly joined hands, but between those who advocated commitment in literature and those who saw that such an involvement would vulgarise and lower down the standard of literature. Therefore it was, on the whole, an aesthetic quarrel. The different points of view will be paraphrased at the end of this discussion.

Marxist theories of literature, however, were by no means the only influences which were playing on the rising generation of experimentalist poets. A profound but perhaps less definable influence was making itself felt during the fifties, that of J.P. Sartre.[44] Sartre's influence on shaping some of the attitudes of the generation of avant-garde poets was effected in two spheres: in the promotion of his theory of committed literature and in the spread of his existentialist ideas which had an important effect on the poetic attitude of the generation of poets rising to fame in the fifties. In this section, our concern is with the first influence.

It was from February to July, 1947, in his magazine Les Temps Modernes, that Sartre published a series of articles entitled "Qu'est que la litterature?" which immediately asserted its importance. Henri Peyre writing in 1949 describes it as "likely to remain as one of the most important professions of faith, not only of this century but in the history of French letters."[45] These articles are a keen analysis of the relation between the writer and his public. The true demoralizers, they imply, are the poets and writers who

> enjoyed the benefits of a social order in which they refused to take any interest... and abstracted themselves from the anguish of their contemporaries. They polished their words for posterity, rose serenely above their time and place to be universal and detached in their appeal .[46]

It is impossible here to paraphrase the whole discussion which appeared so "original"[47] to his contemporaries. The ideas of commitment he puts

forward have since been so diffused among other writers that it is not possible for us now to feel their full initial originality. In the Arab world his ideas sometimes mixed, in the writings of critics, with those based on Marxist theories of literature. This is very clear in the writings of Ra'īf al-Khouri who began writing on committed literature before the publication of these articles, but was drawn in the mid fifties to attack Communist censorship and imposition on the essential freedom of a writer, as has been demonstrated above.* Sartre says on this topic:

> Poor Communist intellectuals. They have fled the ideology of their class of origin only to find it again in the class they have chosen. This time there is no more laughing; work, family, country - these are the words they must sing. I imagine that they must often rather want to let loose, but they are chained. [48]

For Sartre, commitment is a spontaneous result by virtue of being a writer who "has to respond to a certain demand and who has been invested, whether he likes it or not, with a certain social function".[50] Sartre makes the chief motives of artistic creation "the need of feeling that we are essential in relationship to the world".[51] The writer, in his view, is committed

> when he tries to achieve the most lucid and the most complete consciousness of being embarked, that is, when he causes the commitment of immediate spontaneity to advance, for himself and others, to the reflective. The writer is, par excellence, a mediator, and his commitment is mediation. [52]

With words like these the task of the writer is defined. Peyre summarizes his call aptly saying that the first duty of a writer in Sartre's opinion is "to establish language in its dignity and rejuvenate and transform worn out

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* Al-Khouri may also have been influenced by Trotsky's ideas on the artist's freedom. Trotsky's little study Literature and Revolution which was published in 1924 might represent the most liberal view on art given in Russia after the Revolution. The gist of his idea is that "The Soviet State, and its ruling party, had no right to dictate to artists or writers what they should do and how they should do it ... artistic creation obeyed its own laws; it could not flourish and be true to itself without experimentation and unhampered development."[49]

techniques. The second is to take sides against any injustice,* wherever it may come from. Then to represent the world and bear witness to it. Above all to build."[53]

He is made, surely, to take sides. There are two enemies, Communism and Capitalism. But his commitment is to the working class. Here Sartre is speaking directly of the French working class, who have had a certain degree of education.[55] An Arab writer in the fifties could not impose the demand with the same kind of convincingness, for apparent reasons, and much (but not all) of the emphasis was laid, therefore, on the commitment to write about the masses. One can see in this a part of the cause of haziness in the writings on the subject at that time, although there are also other causes.

The campaign of "iltizām" in modern Arabic poetry had positive and negative results. On the one hand it helped greatly to bring about a deeper consciousness in poets of the experiences of the nation and tied many of them to the real struggle at home, lessening to a considerable degree the dangers of cultural alienation to which poets were often exposed. On the other hand, the great insistence on content and on the use of simple language nearer to that of the spoken language helped towards the weakening of some poetic elements such as condensation, depth and terseness. This is seen even in the poetry of the foremost Socialist poet, al-Bayyāti.

The call for committed literature produced a great deal of counter criticism. "This [call does not constitute] an aesthetic concept of literature and criticism," said one critic, "you do not see art through Socialism, but Socialism through art."[56] "It has no real artistic

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* This is an important point for it lays the stress on freedom. Sartre's statement is as follows: "The writer's duty is to take sides against all injustices, wherever they may come from ... From this point of view we must denounce British politics in Palestine and American politics in Greece as well as Soviet deportations..."[54]

principles," said another, "and makes of the theme the only aim of poetry, caring little for other elements in the poem. Moreover, it judges that poetry has no value of its own in society, but is rather a means to an end."[57] "Marxist commitment," said a third, "hit us at the beginning of the fifties like a sudden brainstorm and changed our poetry to an 'ideological manifesto', producing poems ... like one produces potatoes from a field."[58] "Art", a fourth said, "is not the result of reality alone, but is a mixture of reality, vision and contemplation."[59] One can go on endlessly recounting the protests against the slogans of this call that were being repeated at the time, many of those stemming from Socialist concepts diverging greatly from more liberal Marxist concepts of social commitment in literature as exemplified by Marx, Engels, Trotsky, and others.[60]

It worried those writers that the artist might be tempted to seek harmony with the multitude, and therefore suppress or mitigate what he would naturally wish to say; or might even deviate completely from his original experience.[61] But writers were aware of the pressing needs of Arab life around them to recruit all forces for the service of the general cause, so much threatened by internal and external aggressions. Some of those who criticised the didactic examples of national and 'clamorous' poetry with which the magazines were flooded, escaped from the difficulty by insisting that a capacity for empathy and a commitment to delineate the truth of the poet's experience are necessary.[62] Others were more vague, and, by means of a sophisticated language tried to resolve the issue with seeming ease. "The poet's commitment is to create an atmosphere of amity and understanding ... to humanise the world, ... melting down the fanatical impulses and opening up the world to sympathy and friendship."[63] But bringing in friendship is not necessarily the function of poetry. Modern Arabic poetry, for example, is, in its more sophisticated examples, a poetry of rejection and unresolved tensions, of physical and metaphysical

estrangement in a world increasingly menacing. There is no reason why a poet should not resent, rebel, reject and hate the evils which surround his life, and the idea that a poet cannot resent or hate[64] is not tenable. Again, for the poet to react indiscriminately to life and in vague, generalized terms as opposed to the idea of being committed to life[65] is not an acceptable alternative, because it gives a license for those poets whose basic rebellion is opposed to life to escape from real issues. In the Arab world, the individual's life is tied up very closely with communal life, and if his situation is authentic in his own world, his reaction to the forces which surround it will be at the same time personal and communal. A man of letters, Jabrā I. Jabrā says:

> by the very fact of his living in this rebellious epoch, with its aspirations and resentments, its /mania/ for meddling with his private life, ... /its uneven distribution of wealth where/ some are fantastically wealthy, and some are horrifyingly hungry, its unprecendented social stratification,* is voluntarily or involuntarily an involved part of this era. If he does not rebel and defend his individual entity, he will lose ... /his identity/ and in the name of humanity, progress or freedom ... the ideologists will exploit his powers. Then all that distinguishes him, his special vision of life, his understanding of history or his sympathy with humanity will be obliterated.[66]

This is a good assessment of the situation. However, the fact that no contemporary Arab poet can escape being singed need not lead to a healthy involvement all the time. For influences on the intellectual in the Arab world are greatly diversified, and a poet might be led sometimes by the wrong influences to read history only in horizontal fashion, overlooking its vertical depths and its wider and deeper

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* Jabrā is perhaps speaking here of very recent times when enormous wealth has been concentrated in certain areas, and accumulated by a few individuals, as in the oil countries. However, this is not tenable in a historical perspective, for there has always been a great stratification of society in the Arab world, as elsewhere.

dimensions. It is only the poet's true insight into things that will save him from falling a prey to the many influences which, in the name of those abstract ideals which Jabrā so aptly pointed out, can lure him from the real issue. Whether the poet's involvement takes place by the force of things and circumstances, inescapable because its causes are menacingly active, or whether it is a voluntary commitment on his part, entered upon because life would be unbearable otherwise, because the indignity of the other is also the poet's own indignity, because aggression, coercion and debasement of life can be fought and conquered, are things to be judged not by what the modern Arab poet rejects, but by what he seeks, not by the negative aspects of his involvement, but by its positive aspects. For, in the involvement of the poets, one can surely recognise both positive and negative streaks. But the avant-garde expression is highly symbolised and translates itself into the language of general torment and strife, hope and prayer. What is important at this point, however, is to assert the fact that by the end of the fifties the poets of the ivory towers were practically non-existent among the group of experimentalists. "Anger, social indignation and political hatred", to use Sartre's words,[67] lie at the basis of the modern Arab poem. But it is always the Arab poet's alternative to the objects of his rejection that can show whether he is a lover or a deserter.

(ii) Platform Poetry

Who were the poets' audience in the fifties? The national dilemma pointed to the whole nation in its struggle against internal and external enemies. The external enemies are easily definable, and anyone could attack Imperialism and Zionism without fear of being punished. The internal enemies were more dangerous. According to the bulk of the poetic expression, the whole nation seemed to be divided into the oppressors and the oppressed. The former were either people in power and their 'underlings', or stooges of the external enemies, whilst the latter could be anybody. The oppressors changed faces and methods, but their nature, according to the poetic expression, remained the same: tyrants and jailers when they could, but always basically traitors and fakes. The oppressed kept the same face, lighted sometimes with hope and faith, but always oppressed, harassed and denied. They did not belong to any one single class of oppressed, but represented rather a vast, diversified multitude. The poets, throwing in their lot with the oppressed, with whom they identified themselves, (they felt at one with all those jailed and tormented), were well aware of the dangers of exposing themselves to the easy scrutiny of those in power, and much of their poetry turned to oblique methods, addressing a more elite kind of audience. Many of them succeeded in reflecting important elements in the contemporary consciousness, creating a poetry which their times demanded, a poetry of rejection, either negative or positive, of foreboding, sometimes of hope. Other poets concentrated on the external enemies, or satirised an Arab tyranny if it was remote enough (although some poets showed great courage in attacking either obliquely or directly their own governments), or an ousted decrepit internal

system. They were the ones who kept to a direct method of expression and did not utilise the more sophisticated tools of modern poetry. Perhaps they could not do that, but one must also remember that their kind of commitment did not compel them to do so.

The nation divided itself into several audiences of poetry. There were the readers of avant-garde poetry, who gathered sometimes in small groups to listen to modern poetry, often in free verse, being read to them, and tried to assimilate its new rhythms and its more oblique methods. Most of them had had some access to Western poetry either direct or in translation. Some middle line poets (such as the famous Nizār Qabbāni [1920?]), whose poetry retained some conventional streaks (in form, attitudes, or diction and imagery) vaccilated between this audience and a less selective one. Other poetry catered, to quote from an essay written at the end of the fifties,

> for two cravings on the part of the general audience. It has in fact two types of audience. The first is the urban literary salon, whether it belongs to a private patron of literature or to a formal society. This audience is decidedly middle class whose craving is for comfort and entertainment. The salon poetry, therefore, caters for those needs, and the kind of poetry most enjoyed in these salons is love poetry or any verse which is soft, easily understood and entertaining. The second audience is that of the large hall where the poet stands on a platform and declaims his poetry to a huge gathering from all classes of people whose craving is for high tension and enthusiasm; and therefore the poetry best enjoyed in the large hall is patriotic poetry. [68]

This last type of poetry has been termed in this work 'platform poetry', because it is written with the intention of being delivered from a platform to a large audience. This poetry is decidedly committed to the national and political issues of the hour. The link between poetry and the platform was established during the first quarter of this century. Shauqi, Ḥāfiẓ, al-Raṣāfi, al-Zahāwi, al-Kāẓimi, al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr and many others had a direct and sustained involvement with the public. In

these early days it was the poetry of the period, and the change in its quality from a salon and court poetry in the nineteenth century to a poetry of the open audience in the twentieth was effected spontaneously. The tradition was carried on by another generation of poets, with men like al-Qarawi, Abū Rīshah, Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān and al-Jawāhiri becoming famous masters of the platform. New concepts of poetry were being advocated at the time, insisting on an internalised kind of poetic expression and an intensive attack on the externalised poetry of the neo-Classical poets was launched by the avant-garde poets and critics of those decades, as has been fully described.[69] However, this kind of poetry flourished steadily in spite of these attacks, developing its techniques all the time. Echoing communal feelings and emotions on the one hand, and being the heritage of the famous neo-Classicists on the other, it was only natural that it continue its development in the fifties where the need for a united, nationally conscious community was great after the disintegration which took hold of the Arab people as a result of the Palestine disaster. However, this line of externalised poetry in the fifties, differed from its earlier prototype in that it was no more the poetry of the most important poets of the period, nor did it constitute the main stream of contemporary Arabic poetry. The new avant-garde poetic experiments were able to overshadow it among the more sophisticated literary circles and among the more sophisticated readers in a way that the Romantic and Symbolic poetry of the thirties and forties was not able to do. (Poets like al-Shābbi, ʿAql, Abū Shabakah and Nāji could never overshadow a poet like al-Jawāhiri for example.) But in the fifties, this kind of platform poetry, although it flourished and served its public commitment, became rather alienated from the main stream and separated into a distinctive stream of its own. If asked, the avant-garde poets today might well assert that it is not poetry at all, but mere versification. To them, it is instantaneous, hollow, grandiose and full

of bombast. It has no relevance to direct experience but preys on the emotions of a public eager for excitement and sensationalism.[70]

Platform poetry in the fifties enjoyed a considerable popularity among the large audience of poetry, but it was not the only kind of traditional poetry that was being written then. It only constituted one specailised type with a technique of its own. It is the special technique of this poetry that is the theme of this discussion. Critics of modern poetry are in the habit of dismissing all the poetry which keeps to the convention of the monorhymed two hemistich verse as the same kind of traditional and old fashioned poetry. The study of platform poetry as a type of its own has not been attempted fully by any so far.

Technique:* Platform poetry probably is not a demanding verse-form but it must have its special poets. A large audience and the living voice are both essential elements in the formation of the poem. The successful platform poet is essentially a man of the public; in his poetry he can never be reticent, withdrawn, meditative or private. In his role as a speaker of verse from a platform, he has to dramatise, but he is not an actor. His voice is neither the voice of the lyrical poet talking merely about his own thoughts and feelings, nor the voice of the narrator telling a story, nor that of the stage actor voicing the words of another person. It is his own voice uttering the communal cry of joy or woe. He is the preacher, admonisher, satirist, instigator, but he is also one of the audience, admonished, satirised, preached to or instigated, with them.

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* These observations are deduced from a study of the recorded poetry of the first poetry festival held at Damascus between May 16-21, 1959, by courtesy of the Syrian Broadcasting Station, Damascus. The present writer is deeply indebted to the director of the Broadcasting House at that time, and to the technicians who so kindly helped her in carrying out this study over the period of two weeks. The present writer is likewise indebted to Mr. J. Carnochan of the Phonetics Department at S.O.A.S. of London University for his expert advice on the phonetical aspects of this discussion.

And as he is himself the subject and object, so are the audience. They are not merely listeners, they are actively present in the poem not only because the poem had to be contrived with them as receivers at the other end in mind, but also because they are included in its emotional make-up. It revolves around their own feelings and problems as it revolves around the poet's own feelings and problems, all within the communal framework of life.[71]

The poet's voice is a decisive factor in this poetry. If his declamatory powers are poor, his poem fails signally. These declamatory powers are not limited to his voice quality alone, but include his ability to modulate his voice and to vary his tone in keeping with both the meaning of his poem and with the psycho-emotional response of his audience.* This leads to the discussion of the rhythm of this poetry. But before attempting this, it is imperative that the form of platform poetry should be discussed.

The predominant form used in platform poetry is the monorhymed two hemistich form, although some stanza forms in symmetrical two hemistichs have been sometimes attempted with some success.[72] However, the former seems to be the ideal form, firstly because it abounds with stock rhythms, and secondly because of its continuity and stretch of pattern, so that the poet can impose his own variations of rhythmical units and emotional jets, of modulation of tone on speaking it, without the interference of an elaborate structure.[73] This pattern, although it is obvious and strictly symmetrical, is basically simple and allows all kinds of tone, emotional sweep and rhythmical variation. Although very traditional, it has never

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* When a poem by al-ʿAqqād was read by another at the festival, which the poet could not attend, it was a complete failure, and not only because the poem was not a first class platform poem. The reader of the poem never grasped the poet's emotional base. See Al-Thaqāfah magazine, an issue on the poetry festival at Damascus, June , 1959, p.19. A tepid reaction was also recorded to a poem by Anwar al-ʿAṭṭār, ibid., pp.50-2 and 69. Although his poem contained other elements required for a successful platform poem, his rendering and the quality of his voice were not adequate enough.

lost its vitality to the Arabs. The rhyme at the end of every verse gives the poet a rhythmic balance by which he can be guided throughout. It has, to use W. Nichols words, "a pivot-like quality which is part and parcel of the texture ... of his poem's fundamental pattern".[74]

The platform poem usually has an ostentatious rhythm. A good platform poet like al-Jawāhiri and the Syrian Sulaimān al-'Īsā (1921) is in complete harmony with the poem's rhythmic base, i.e. the nature of its "emotional pulsation",[75] (again to borrow from Nichols), and will render it with similar rhythmic speed. When the emotion, which is perhaps the most important element in this kind of poetry, sweeping over the whole poem in large or small rolling waves, is at the beginning of its movement, the poet is slower, and his voice is lower and more even. As the emotion gathers strength, his rhythm gathers speed and his rendering follows the same parallel, so that at the moment of the climax of emotion, his voice has risen to the climax of its declamatory function breaking down with a flourish. These modulations of the poet's voice are helped and enhanced by the right kind of sounds of the words of the poem, for as Bateson says "sound is always primarily semantic".[76] All this will be illustrated with examples soon. The important thing to remember here is that the platform poem is made up of many tidal movements each with its own independent climax, which comes always at the end, with the poet's voice falling, sometimes sharply, after a sudden rise, but more often dropping to a natural, expected and even craved for *finale* after a gradual preparatory upstep of the pitch of the voice. But although each tidal wave has its own internal movement quite independent of the other, there is a subtle current flowing from cycle to cycle. This rhythmic, symantic, emotional structure can effect "a great purgation of suffering by beauty of sound and distraction of thought".[77] All this manipulation of the voice and rhythm is closely connected with the meaning. The weight of the poet's

voice, the intensity of the rendering, the rush or slowness of the rhythm, the rise and fall, the apt use of pause and stress, the whole cycle of the grand swell, must derive from the poet's central theme. On the whole, it is a simple formula of ebb and flow. The poet, when he composes is either consciously or unconsciously aware of this ever advancing and retreating tidal wave in the poem and fits his meanings and emotions, his images and catch-words, to suit this basic structure.* Of course, in Arabic, the poet has great freedom in manoeuvring his tidal waves because Arabic quantitative metre gives great scope for these variations, and the stresses are arbitrary, depending on the phonological structure of the words, so that the presence of long vowels and certain consonants, for example, the nasals, provides occasion for abnormal prominence achieved by an increase in the stress or in the prolongation of the voice, as has been discussed above in the chapter on Mandūr's phonetic experiment.[78] As I.A. Richards says, "to read poetry well is extremely difficult".[79] What saves the situation for platform poetry is that a bad reader would not venture on the platform at all.

It has already been mentioned that the theme of platform poetry is generally patriotic. In the fifties very few platform poets would be committed to anything but an Arab nationalist theme. Socialist ideas seeped into the national poetry of the platform, but did not dominate the poem. Syrian nationalist poets had the habit at the beginning of the fifties of reading their poems to an audience made up predominantly of members of their group, but their activities were becoming increasingly unpopular with the surge of Arab nationalism in that decade, and their poets started looking for a more vital theme.

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* Sa'īd Elīssa..., a Palestinian poet, told the present writer that when writing this kind of poetry, he could predict the verses that would arouse in a large audience the necessary reaction.

The question of poetry and belief imposes itself here. Richards alleged in his Practical Criticism, which is an experimental book of great interest to students of poetry, that "most readers, and nearly all good readers, are very little disturbed by even a direct opposition to their own beliefs and the beliefs of the poet ... And when they differ, their divergencies will commonly not be a result of their different positions with regard to the doctrines of the authors, but are more likely to derive from other causes .."[80]

However, in platform poetry it is of paramount importance that the audience believe in at least the most prominent doctrinal notions laid down in the poem.* The poet, in fact, usually speaks about themes which his audience holds dear or sacred, relying on a shared outlook. Among them, the best theme is that which is the issue of the moment.[81] This difference between this platform poetry and all other, is one of purpose. The intention of the platform poem is not primarily aesthetic, although some poems, like those of Sulaimān al-'Īsā and al-Jawāhiri, contain some developed aesthetic features. The intention of the platform poem is social and emotional. It must therefore harmonise with emotional and social attitudes of the audience and cannot accept a dislocation of values. Another reason for this is that the audience of platform poetry, being large and indiscriminate, with many cultural backgrounds, can have only one craving in common, either national or communal. Other cravings are difficult to share among such a diverse grouping of people. The less cultured among them, moreover, are not accustomed to experiencing a quick reaction to original poetry, especially to an original theme at variance with their own concepts. This is why the platform poem is "built upon a

* What is meant here is that if the poem generalises on accepted themes, a poet can get away with some brief reference to a theme that has either fallen out of favour to a degree, or that has not yet been incorporated into the basic beliefs of the audience.

foundation of stock responsos", again to use Richards' words.[82] It resorts to an "extensive repertory of stock responses", and if it is a good platform poem, presents its stock meanings, images, words, and rhythms in such a way as to evoke the precise stock responses of the listeners, acting upon what Richards calls "the native familiarity" of those poems. This "implies ... that the mental movements out of which they are composed have long been part of our intellectual and emotional repertory ..."[83] These stock elements in the poem "come home to a majority of /hearers/ with a minimum of trouble, for no new outlook, no new direction of feeling is required".[84] It must be remembered that at poetry festivals in the Arab world the rendering of poems can go on for several hours. Even had the audience been more select, it would be extremely strenuous to ask them to listen for such a length of time to any but a poetry made, through the dependence on a theme near to their hearts, on an affirmation of values they adhere to, and on a repertory of stock elements, easy and enjoyable.*

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* An exception presents itself in a poem by Hāshim al-Rifā'i.[85] It was in the form of a letter from a son to his father. The son was awaiting execution the next morning at a Baghdad prison and wrote bidding his father farewell. A platform poem usually speaks directly about the theme, talking about the abstract themes of nationalism, Arab unity, glory and ambitions, about tyranny, imperialism, treason, and aggression. It is a rally of words, which are sometimes angry, sometimes exuberant, and usually very bombastic and self-exhibitionistic. Translated into another language, it would lose its significance and its human relevance. But this poem is different. Using the simplest, most conversational language imaginable, the poem delineates a deep human experience with a powerful national reference. It is a narrative in the first person and the human experience it portrays would find immediate appeal in any language. However, the poet succeeds in appealing to a mass audience, for two reasons. Firstly, because he truthfully describes the hard experience which they could identify themselves with, his reaction, his relationship with his father to whom he writes consolingly, and his mother, about whom he worries, his mention of his reading a few verses of the Quran, his bewailing his youth, are all portrayed from the point of view of the average Arab man in the same position. Secondly, there is a heroic spirit in the poem, which, being mixed with modesty, wins tremendous appeal. Now the criterion of success of a platform poem is the immediate reaction it wins with the audience. The audience expresses approval by clapping at the end of a tidal wave of verses. This has its

(Continued on next page)

The emotion in a good platform poem is also manipulated in recurring waves or spurts to fit the waves of the rhythm as well as the meaning. It fits each of them like a glove. Despite the fact that it can be given to the public in great excess, provided it does not fall into absurdities, it usually holds its own with the audience. This is because the theme is serious and often grave, employing more virile emotions, which ward off mawkishness and sugariness, giving it the necessary hard core. A good platform poet can evoke the most violent surges of emotion, arriving with the audience at sheer ecstasy.

Of course the poet must sustain a kind of warmth and liveliness in his style, even in the preparatory passages when he is gathering speed and enthusiasm. The emotional sweep of this kind of verse has been a liberating force for the spirit of thousands whose poetic education is traditional, and a catharsis for the suffocating undercurrents of Arab life. This emotion, strictly speaking, is not personal, but it is pregnant with a conventional emotionalism which can infect the audience tremendously. This emotionalism is inherent in the basic build-up of a platform poem and lies latent in the repetitive words and phrases, which a poet can recall at the moment of composition and re-experience over and over again.

The tone in this poetry can vary, even in the same poem, according to whether the audience is to be stirred up, defied, mollified, or

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* Continued from previous page.

conditions which will be described later. Clapping is sometimes accompanied by a roar of acclamation and a shower of slogans. It is apparent that it is the more surface passions of the audience that are aroused. In this poem, al-Rifāʿi was interrupted only twice in this fashion, in fact after the passages which point to heroism and challenge, and this in a poem of seventy-one verses. However, the audience was very quiet during the reading with a hush of excitement dominating the hall, quite detectable in the recording. But as soon as the poet finished, the audience broke into exuberance, clapping powerfully, but not the erratic, fire-triggered clapping we hear in the usual platform poetry, but a rhythmic clapping, with a regular beat which went on for quite a long time. One could feel that it was the innermost emotions of the audience which had been touched.

persuaded. But a good platform poet will hesitate before he effects any serious change of mood. The basic mood of the poem, whether it is one of enthusiasm, optimism, pessimism, anger or glorification of a certain important event, must not fall into antithesis.

The imagery of this kind of verse often depends on stock metaphors, but when handled by a first class poet like al-Jawāhiri, can be quite original without really blocking the receiving capacity of the audience. Al-Jawāhiri gets away with many idiosyncracies such as the use of unfamiliar words also, which he imposes with force on the audience, usually obtaining a strong reaction. Other poets of lesser magical calibre can lose in effect if they employ unfamiliar words or a very original image which the audience fail to assimilate quickly. But al-Jawāhiri does not, firstly because his basic theme is clarified right from the beginning and qualified in most impressive manner, and secondly because his emotional surge is so overwhelming as to be able to enfold any unfamiliarity in its vigorous sweep.* Rylands quotes Longinus as saying that "The proper time for using metaphors is when the passions roll like a torrent and sweep a multitude of them down in resistless flood. For it is the nature of passions in their vehement rush to sweep and thrust everything before them ...".[87]

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* A poem delivered at the festival furnishes a good example of the use of an unfamiliar word in the middle of many highly effective catch words. It did not interfere with the effect but was swallowed in the emotional sweep of the verses before and after it. After several verses of high oratorical and emotional quality the poet, Muḥammad Muḥammad 'Ali says :

86 مجد قومي عقيدتي وصباحـــي وسبيلي الى الذرى الشمـــــاء
ما عرفنا غير العروبـة مـــــن نـــــور يجلي حنادس الظلمـــــاء
ما عرفنا غير العروبـة مـــــن سيـــــف يغني في مهجـــة الاعـــداء

With this last verse the audience broke into very strong clapping. The fact that the word "ḥanādis" is unfamiliar (although phonetically impressive), had no negative effect on the reaction of the audience.

The image must conform in its timing and completion to the waves of the poem. A long image must finish before or with the end of the tidal circle, and the most poignant and moving image is often placed at the climax:

واعصد "الهيكل" المهجور غاشية ... كأنها في رداء الليل احبار
صماء بكماء فهي الدهر عاصفة ... وانها العمر الغاز واسرار
احت بهامتها الاحداث عابثة ... كأنما في يد الاحداث بتّار
الى الثرى قد تهاوت غير واحدة ... كأنها مارد في الروع جبّار

88

The images most suitable to this kind of verse are the strong, fleeting images connected with Arab life and scenery, images that hark back to a communal experience or usage. They are functional and not merely ornamental, for they enhance the meaning tremendously. Platform poetry cannot afford to overload itself with what Rylands calls the calligraphic images of poetry, i.e. images that merely beautify and delight.[89] In this and in his use of words, the platform poet is more like an orator than like a poet who can use images for either purpose with equal facility.

Diction: the first thing to remember is that platform poetry is the nearest we have in verse to an oration, and as in all oratory, the platform poet makes use of rhetorical devices. His purpose is to rally people in a firm determination to continue in their resistance or enthusiasm, and he needs a strong, high flown language to do that. Whereas in poetry in general, rhetoric is out of fashion nowadays, and a preference for the conversational in poetry is manifest, rhetoric is usually a necessary component of platform poetry because of its oratorical quality.

The use of language in platform poetry is of paramount importance because of the necessity of choosing words with the right kind of associations. A platform poet leans heavily on stock words. Certain terms, images and words tend to recur in this poetry assuming a special reference to political events, national aspirations and revolutionary motifs. The following are some of the stock words in the first eighteen

verses of the poem read by Sulaimān al-ʿĪsā at the festival. Words denoting the Arab struggle are:

90 الدامي ، ابـــاء ، ثـــورة ، صمـــود ، خلـــود ، كبرياء ، الطواغيت ، الجريمـــة
الحسام ، رجـــال ، النـــار ، جـــراح ، قتيـــل ، هتـــاف ، جثـــــة ، انقـــاض
زاحفـــون ، حدود ، الضياء ، صفوف ، حمراء ، خناجر ، الغدر ، منـــــزل
غضبـــان ، مهدود

Words of places in the Arab world are extremely impressive. Usually the poet refers to the capital of an Arab country, or its main river or mountain. Here the following were mentioned by al-ʿĪsā بغـــداد دار السلام ، الرمـادى The mention of the capital of a foreign country in opposition to current political ideals is also very effective. In al-ʿĪsā's poem Moscow was the target, for his poem was on the struggle of Arab nationalism against the communist flux in Iraq at the time. The mention of names of great Arab personages throughout Arab history, or reference to them (for example he refers to President Nasser here as the dark one الاسمـــر)[91] is also very effective. In the above passage محمـــــد and الرشيـــــد are mentioned. All these have deep nationalistic connotations. Many other words in the passage also carry specific nationalistic associations such as: الضاد ، الصحراء ، امتـــي ، عربـــي ، قبـة ، اليهود ، الحضـــــارات ، النبوات ، غرباء. In much platform poetry the word glory المجـــد is very often used,[92] because of its strong appeal to a lost glory which the present Arab struggle is trying to revive. But this word has become completely worn out with over-use. The following are stock phrases frequently in use in this poetry: فـــوق الـــذرى and ارث الجـــــــــــدود . Some of the most effective words are those which have religious associations. In the poem of Hāshim al-Rifāʿi studied above, the verse ويهدني الي فانشد راحتي في بضع آيـات من القـرآن brought an immediate reaction from the audience who clapped loudly and at length although there had not been any other elements in this and the previous verses to bring about the usual reaction. The same thing

happened after two verses when he mentioned his belief in God and his joy in this belief. In Sulaimān al-'Īsā's poem above the mention of Muḥammad had the same effect. The general quality of words in this poetry is one of clarity and simplicity, verbal facility and riches in emotional associations. The poet refrains from the oblique usage of words, from the drastic alteration in the natural order of the sentence, and from the use of complex paradox of meaning, although contrast of simple images is welcome in the vein of the famous verse بيض صنائعنا ، سود وقائعنا .*

The texture of the words tends to be more fluid, because of the connection with reading aloud. Scope for modulation and stress is given generously by a good platform poet, by using words with long vowels, or with semi-long vowels such as و and ى , with the nasal consonants م and ن , or with the liquid ل .

The rhyme is usually well chosen for resonance, but resonance is also a sustained quality in the whole of the poem. The poet often resorts to repetition of certain phrases, which enhances tremendously the emotional effect. Sentences are often short, allowing for arbitrary pause if the declamatory style of the poet so demands. Ḥammūdah aptly describes the method of Ḥāfiẓ in composing a poem saying that he used to imagine himself an orator reading his poem aloud to an audience. This was the reason, he said, why Ḥāfiẓ resorted to repetition and to the use of short sentences.[94]

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* The following verses from the poem by the Syrian poetess Ṭal'at al-Rifā'i illustrate the successful use of contrast in this poetry:

93

امرّوض الثيران . . تخطف لحظها بالاحمر القاني . . عليه تحمحم
. . . . . .
امرّوض الثيران تلك ملاعبي الخضراء كيف بغير ارضك تقحم
لمّا يئست من الضياغم ختبها الثور ثور . . . اين منه الضيغم

where the green and the red, the ox and the lion are contrasted. The effect of these verses is shown by the fact that the audience applauded loudly at the end of the last verse.

Application: The above elements constitute the necessary basic conditions of a good platform poem; but it is the rendering which makes it functional. As has been described above, a good platform poem is made up of units or cycles (tidal waves is another description), built on a climactic organisation in which the meaning, internal rhythm, emotion and imagery are well contained. The whole poem is studded with individual stock words and phrases. The meaning is developed so that it gains its maximum poignancy at the end of a cycle, accompanied by an emotional voltage conveyed both in the meaning and (and this is most important), in the tone of the poet's voice. The poet usually begins quietly, sometimes even sadly, depending on the meaning. His voice will then gain in enthusiasm as the meaning develops (sometimes jumps) to one of challenge, threat, glorification, exaltation, promise. The poet in the rendering prepares the audience for this climax by raising the pitch of his voice either gradually or suddenly (according to the gradual or sudden development of the meaning), and then dropping it with a flourish at the end of the telling verse. The following verses produced such exalted acclamation that the poetess repeated them to the audience:

95

باسم الذين على المشانق علقوا — باسم الطلابين الذين تيتموا
" بالموصل " الزهراء تغرق بالدما — باسم البيوت على بنيها تهدم
" بجميلة " والنار تمضغ عظمها — بالخلد تحرسه " رجاء ومريم "
عرب وان لم تبق منا قطرة — عربية " بغداد " مهما هدموا

These were preceded by four short units each of them acclaimed. The poetess's voice was rather even, though high pitched, during the rendering of the first three of the above verses, but she raised her voice to a rapid brief crescendo with the word " عرب " then kept to a high even pitch over the next five words " وان لم تبق منا قطرة ", then again raised her voice in a staccato crescendo with " عربية ", then in a

smooth prolonged crescendo with " بغـــداد ", then slowed over the next two words lowering both volume and pitch to a poignant hush with the end of the verse.*

This method of rendering poetry from a platform conforms to the best technique possible. The poet, if he wants to lead the audience to a desired reaction must be able to perfect this technique. Some poets do not prepare the audience by the necessary crescendoes and the necessary diminution and pause, and fail to produce a reaction.

Suliamān al-'Īsā can obtain very quick reactions from the audience right from the beginning. His rendering, like that of al-Jawāhiri, has a magical effect, the audience waxes quickly, upborne upon the emotional surge. In the following lines which are the overture of his poem at the festival, the audience reacted well with clapping after even the second line, and went into a frenzy of acclamation after the last. Before the last word on which his voice died with a flourish, he had given a consecutive number of crescendoes:

في العراق الدامي غصت جناحـــــــــي واسلمـــت للابـــــاء نشيـــــدي

في العراق الطعين لا ثورتـــــي انهـــارت ولا نـاء بالدمـــــار صمـــــودي

clapping

يحفـر الحاقد الهجين ضريحـــــي واواريه في غبـــار خلـــــودي

كبرياء الصحراء تذرو الطواغيـــــــت عجاجـا في رملهـا الممـــدود

ونحط الرجال . . فالدهـــر لمـــع لحســـام ورنـــة لقصيـــــد

acclamation repetition

With this kind of poetry the allegation that the mono-rhymed two hemistich verse suffers from a basic monotony is shown to be unjustified. There is excellent scope for variations of pitch, volume, tone and emotional and phonetic stress in a good platform poem. When at its best it is permeated with a lively emotion which develops into cycles of varying length and strength, each arriving at its own climax. Its

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* Attention is drawn to these features of the voice by the arrows in the text of the two examples given.

particular technique differs greatly from say that of free verse which, in its best examples, develops organically, usually arriving at one climax towards the end.

Platform poetry is the most oratorical of all conventional poetry. As poetry, it is rarely interesting to be read only;[96] but this should not lead to the idea that all of it falls within this category. Some poems which have the elements of success on the platform can make very good reading too, such as those of al-Jawāhiri, which are often as creative as any.[97] There was, ever since 1959 when the first poetry festival was held in Damascus, a mounting encouragement for this kind of verse, and because of its great divergence in methods, attitudes and purpose from the avant-garde poetry, the quarrel between traditionalists and avant-garde poets and critics was magnified. The platform poet has a strong basis for defence of his own method if he realises the fact that he is writing a 'different' kind of poetry, with distinctive qualities, and a distinctive purpose of its own. Although it is not the best poetic expression of the nation, it serves a purpose and keeps alive the tradition of a verse for the people keeping the latter in constant touch not only with events in their emotional sphere, but also with the rhythms and persistent qualities of their own poetry. Its greatest disadvantage is that it helps to confirm the traditional rhythms and rhetorical treatment of poetry by the traditionalists. But without the diffusion of poetry among the people, a large section of them would be completely cut away from all modern verse, because of the difficulty of much avant-garde poetry.

SECTION 5: TRADITIONAL AND MODERN

Every literary epoch experiences the traditional quarrel between the old and the new; but the present epoch in Arabic poetry had the most heated quarrel imaginable, and the tension between the two schools of thought has not yet relaxed. The literary quarrel concentrated on poetry, because poetry is the only well-developed literary art of the Arabs, and has great sanctimony in the hearts of the people. The jealousy with which it is guarded was set aflame when drastic changes began taking place in the fifties, attracting many followers among poets, critics and readers. It was apparent that the new movement of free verse, and the accompanying changes in the diction, attitude, and imagery of poetry were serious and consequential, and must have seemed threatening to those whose concept of a perfect poem was informed by the examples of the Classical qaṣīdah. The traditionalists felt strongly that they should fight this "menace" with stubborn insistence. On the other hand, the avant-garde poets, in order to defend their own experiments, naturally attacked the old poetry; but their attack took on a more acute tone with the renewed revival of the traditional qaṣīdah which was exploited to support the cause of Arab nationalism, as has been shown in the discussion on platform poetry. They felt that this was a "regression" that should be fought vigorously. Consequently, a grave split in the poetic sensibility of the audience of poetry in the fifties took place. Accusations were hurled from each side, some of them arriving at a drastic level.

The Syrian poet, Nizār Qabbāni, called this quarrel "the battle between right and left",[98] a rather misleading tag, for it points to certain political convictions not applicable to all the poets. Among

politically left-wing* poets there were those, like al-Jawāhiri, who stuck to the old form of the qaṣīdah, while many avant-garde poets were right-wing in their politics.** However, Qabbāni's other descriptions of the two schools of thought is adequate to a certain degree; but it is more appropriate to speak of traditionalist and avant-garde rather than right and left wing. The traditionalists he describes as people with a quiet, serene outlook, who believe in the sanctimony of the old literature and are committed intellectually, spiritually and historically to poetic patterns which they regard as final and adequate for every time and place, refusing any variation on them. This rigid constancy in the concept of the poetic form and approach has been a target for complaint by many other modern poets.[99] Expressing it ironically, Qabbāni said that the traditionalists regard the qaṣīdah as a form inevitably and irrevocably determined by fate, a ready-made garment fit for all occasions. The avant-garde poets, on the other hand, stand with their lungs open to the fresh air, to all currents which inspire them to rebel and reject and to forge a new destiny. "They are a generation which reads history but refuses to be buried in its tomb."[100]

The traditional qaṣīdah is made the target of fierce and sometimes unfair attack. Most of these poets decided that it had a flat structure with each verse corresponding to a complete and closed world.[101] But the modern poem is dimensional, with each verse a unit in an organic structure growing internally to a point of climax. Some of them accused the Classical qaṣīdah of monotony, inherent in its very structure of monorhyme and the two hemistich form, an accusation which has been technically

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* 'Left-wing' here is used loosely.

** Because of the rather derogatory connotation of this expression in certain circles in the Arab world, the present writer has avoided mentioning names.

disproved in this work, especially in the discussion of platform poetry. The rhetoric of the Classical poetry, the oratorical style, the resonance, which assure for the Arabic poem a real success on the platform, are elements to be rejected in modern poetry. Qabbāni asserts that the Arabs have inherited a musical instinct which enjoys the one-chord instruments whose music depends on the cyclic repetition of the same tune.[102] In the avant-garde poetry, there is greater modulation and a constantly growing internal movement, for the new poets believe that it is man who creates his own forms. As for the rhyme, despite its charm and capacity to excite, it remains an end at which the imagination of the poet halts,[103] panting. The poetic language, moreover, must stem from the conversational everyday language of the people; but the traditionalists are still fanatical about the language of Al-Aghāni and Al-'Iqd al-Farīd,[104] a language which, as poet Adūnīs describes it, is intellectual and abstract, and which, quoting Jacques Berque, descends on life and does not ascend from it.[105] The reflection of the spirit of the age in poetry is insisted upon by all these poets. Those who prefer the patterns of the past, another poet said, have overlooked the fact that every age creates its own style, and although a nation's language and poetry have their own characteristics, they also follow certain general rules of development. It is a farce to insist that Arabic poetry has the exclusive destiny of remaining eternally unchanged in form and approach and yet expect it to be vitally creative.[106] The esteem of the heritage does not lie in constricting the literature of later ages to the older patterns of this heritage, but in letting it live with us, inform us, enrich us and strengthen our expression and phraseology, allowing us at the same time to preserve our contemporaneousness.[107]

The attack of the traditionalists on the new poetry is also one of rejection and shock. Badawi al-Jabal, whose authenticity as a poet

of great talent led him to enjoy some examples of free verse, would accept it only as a different art form, not as poetry. In his view the Classical forms are capable of entertaining all that one needs to express,[108] and sooner or later this other wave will pass away and poets will return to the right forms of poetry (meaning the monorhymed, two hemistich form). It was a pity, he thought, that young poets should waste their talent on such exercises.[109] Others were not as charitable. George Ṣaidaḥ, the Mahjar poet, considered that these poets were incapable of writing in the testing form of Arabic poetry, and resorted to free verse for ease.[110] This verse form was also accused by some of being a conspiracy against the authenticity of the Arab poetic form and its whole culture,[111] and the simplification of language in the new poetry was accused as a conspiracy on the language of the Quran, as a split with the heritage, one which represented a deep resentment against Arab nationalism.[112] A legitimate complaint against the new poetry was one directed by George Ṣaidaḥ who protested against the ambiguity of the new poetry saying that "a symbol should be different from a riddle".[113] He also attacked what he saw to be an artificiality in the new experiments, sounding a doleful note on what he called "the conceit and over-confidence" of these new poets.[114]

A more sophisticated argument was presented by Zaki Najīb Maḥmūd. Writing in 1961,[115] he asked "What is new in the new poetry?". If it is the mitigation of the poetic form, then this has been a failure, for the new form is indefinable. Form, he explains, is the basic element in all art, and it is present only if one can deduce from it a definition which other artists can follow. But free verse in Arabic has not produced a form which can be described and defined, and therefore it is not poetry at all. He adds that the new poets define this form as depending on the repetition of one foot; however, there are, he argues, several metres in Arabic which depend on the repetition of one foot, but in addition to

other rules.[116] The art form, he insists, requires great rigour and tenacity obstinacy, and the more rigorous it is, the greater is the achievement of the artist in handling and possessing it. This obstinate rigour is the secret of greatness in the pre-Islamic poetry. Even when the poetic language seems to flow harmoniously, it embodies great skill, for the poet's achievement lies in his control over an elusive, slippery material which is language. Can the new poets, he asks, claim that the material of their language possesses this strength and obstinacy? He answers in the negative, for "the structure is made of straw. You can say what you like about its content, but the weakness of the structure denies it entrance to the sovereignity of immortal art."[117]

Zaki Najīb Maḥmūd had based his judgment on the study of Egyptian poets among whom Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr represented the modern movement. This merited a protest from Shi'r magazine whose editors claimed that the evaluation of the new poetry which is a wide and complete movement representing a basic attitude in modern Arabic culture, must take into consideration the role played by the Iraqi poets and by the poets of Shi'r magazine themselves. The poetry of 'Abd al-Ṣabūr is not one of the richer and more mature contributions.[118]

Zaki Najīb Maḥmūd's essay stimulated several critics. M. Mandūr asserted that the difference between the old and the new poetry lies in their very nature. It is not limited to the musical form, but involves the theme, imagery and methods of expression. It is true, he continued, that the traditional forms should not be abandoned, but the new form which has greater potentialities for poetry, must be allowed to thrive at its side.[119]

'Izzidīn Ismā'īl, sometimes rather exaggeratedly, summarised the differences between the old and the new poetry in the following points. Firstly, the new aesthetic concept stems from the heart of the artistic

work and is not superimposed. Secondly, that the new poetry is an attempt to understand and explore the essence of life and not only, as with the old poetry, to react to it. Thirdly, that the new poetry reflects the culture of the age on a worldwide basis defining man's attitude to it. Fourthly, that the new poetry invariably embodies a communal experience. Fifthly, that the new poetry tries to reflect history in perspective from the point of view of this age. Sixthly, that the new poetry, because it embodies completely new contexts, employs new frameworks which do not follow a fixed method easily perfectible by practice,* but follow a unique style in each poem. This new style is achieved by the organization of the poetic feet within this framework.[120]

Yet another answer came from Shi'r magazine. The editors argued that the modern poetic revolution does not lie merely in reflecting the age, nor in rejecting what is traditional and old, for neither the change in theme and ideas, nor in form, are enough to secure modernism in poetry.

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* This statement, however, is not acceptable, and raises many points of discussion. In the first place, the fact that a poet has at his hands a fixed poetic pattern is no guarantee that he can perfect it by practice, if by perfecting it we mean being able to produce fine specimens of his own, for this needs much more than practice. In the second place, when using a fixed pattern, the individuality of the poet, his real genius, must show itself in spite of the fact that he is employing a poetic form common to all, and this is more difficult. In free verse this individuality is much more easily pronounced because of the freedom of the poet to invent his own patterns which more easily become characteristic of him and him alone. In other words, one can say that a poet's individuality, if it is of a fine quality, will show itself in any pattern, but more easily in free verse. One must remember an important artistic point, that the fact that a poet employs a fixed pattern does not mean that he writes like everybody else, even from a rhythmic point of view. There is ample opportunity in the mono-rhymed two hemistich form for rhythmic manipulation and musical variation, and the idea of ease should be abandoned. On the other hand, the fact that in free verse the poet is creating his own forms should be appreciated also as a scope for greater invention in poetic music, hitherto unexperienced in Arabic. One might venture here to say that it is perhaps easier to fail in producing an acceptable free verse structure than in producing an acceptable traditional structure, but it is quite difficult to create a really fine structure in either, and more so in the two hemistich form.

The main difference of the new poetry from the old lies firstly in its having a vertical outlook on the age, understanding it with insight, vision and fore-knowledge;[121] and secondly in the capacity of the new poet to abandon the old artistic values, creating his own and expressing them in a unique, purely personal tone.[122] The manipulation of the poetic language and the control of the poetic technique are two primary conditions in poetry, especially in the new poetry which does not follow a fixed pattern in form, but is a living mobile organization. In the old poetry the poetic structure was built on metre, in the new poetry it is built on rhythm, its adequacy being measured by the harmony and complimentary union of its elements. Above all it is dependent on creativity and authenticity.[123]

The idea of fore-knowledge, vision and insight is one of the finest which the new poets insisted upon, but it must be remembered that this is not limited to the new poetry. Neither can one agree with the idea that the new poetry is built on rhythm, not metre. Rhythm in poetry is a very subtle and difficult element to define in such simple terms, and one feels that the writer was speaking more of prose poetry than of free verse, or perhaps more of free verse in the European sense* than of the modern Arab concept of this form, which is definitely built on metre. The manipulation of rhythm in this verse is most important, but the basic musical structure is metric and not purely rhythmic.

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* In A Glossary of Literary Terms by M.H. Abrams (1957) free verse is defined as follows: "Free verse, or in the French term, vers libre, is verse which, although more rhythmic than ordinary prose, is written without a regular metric pattern, and usually without a rhyme. Something resembling free verse used to be found in the King James translation of the Psalms and Song of Solomon. Matthew Arnold experimented with free measures, and Walt Whitman startled the literary world by using loosely rhythmic and variable lines in his Leaves of Grass (1855). The poets of the 1920's, however, began the modern period of intensive exploitation of this verse. An extreme example, ... will demonstrate how subtle are the effects possible, especially in the variation of pace, pause, and time, when the verse is released from the necessity of a recurrent foot."

Zaki Najīb Maḥmūd, whose depth of culture and perception is easily seen in his works (see his Falsafah wa Fann) must have been convinced and wooed by the arguments which his essay aroused, for we find him becoming increasingly more interested in the avant-garde movement, writing about some of the more advanced experiments with insight and interest.[124] But other opponents of the modern poetic experiment continued to repeat their previous arguments, taking strength from the numerous bad examples of free verse that were constantly being produced by bad versifiers.[125] These attackers, naturally, overlooked the fact that equally numerous examples of bad verse were being written in the old two hemistich form and being published in magazines and individual volumes. The avant-garde poets, on the other hand, kept up the experiments, defending them with conviction and, as in the case of all revolutions, refusing to see any virtue in the patterns which they had rejected. In the meanwhile, they acquired greater critical insight and knowledge, and by the beginning of the sixties, were able to explain their experiments in more sophisticated terms.

SECTION 6: TWO AVANT-GARDE MAGAZINES

The two magazines in the fifties which championed the cause of the avant-garde poetic movement were Al-Ādāb and Shi'r, both published in Beirut. This is significant and points to the transfer of the poetic centre in the Arab world to Lebanon. In fact this country enjoyed a political, social and cultural freedom unequalled anywhere in the Arab world. In it one could find all the trends of thought on politics, society and culture which blew through all the Arab world, most of which were represented by its two dozen and more periodical publications. This colourful variety gave it, as when the colours of the spectrum are all superimposed, a colourless quality, a kind of immunity from any dominant streak of thought, and a permissive attitude which made it a haven for poets and writers from all parts of the Arab world. Added to this was Lebanon's central position as an Arab tourist centre, its picturesque scenery, its many educational institutions and its increasing affluence and cultural consciousness. But as regards the poetic contribution itself, the major protagonists of the avant-garde movement came from all over the Arab world. Among them the contribution of the Iraqi poets was central. But all those non-Lebanese poets and critics had firm connections with Lebanon. Their poems and essays were published in the Lebanese magazines, and their volumes of poetry and books of criticism were published by the many Lebanese publishing firms. For the first time in modern history Beirut and not Cairo became the Mecca for Arab intellectuals and their trysting place.[126]

Al-Ādāb was a monthly literary magazine founded in 1953 by Suhail Idrīs, himself a story-writer strongly rooted in the Arab Islamic cultural tradition. Right from the start Al-Ādāb took the lead in the main literary issues of the avant-garde movement and was a platform on which the writers and readers expressed their views on literature and Arab

culture and life. The cause of Arab nationalism, of committed literature, of free verse, of avant-garde criticism, of neo-Realism, and many other topics connected with poetry and the various other branches of literature were taken up by the magazine, discussed, enhanced and given a more national colour. Special numbers were issued at intervals dealing with one branch of discussion, which are in themselves invaluable documents of the mind of the period. The January number of 1955 which specialised in modern poetry may well be the best collection of articles on the history of modern Arabic poetry in most countries of the Arab world ever to be published in one volume. Al-Ādāb, moreover, encouraged and promoted new talents and experiments. A constant monthly feature in it was (and still is) that of the criticism of the material published in the previous number. This was very stimulating to the readers and contributors in the fifties, and was read avidly by them, often creating a chain of discussions and rejoinders. However, the difficulty of procuring a different critic for every number forced the job of criticism sometimes into the hands of less informed critics, which levelled down the standard of the magazine. This, and the fact that the magazine was more interested in stimulating and popularizing literature rather than in creating and sustaining a strict standard of aesthetic and intellectual creativity, made it less professional and more of a popular platform and a training field for talents in the Arab world. But it exercised a great influence in the fifties, and was an integrating force behind Arab creative talent everywhere. One can call it the 'voice of the period', for it is here that one can find the record of the various concepts of the Arab literary mind, its stresses and tensions, its suffering and feeling of tragedy, its aspirations and hopes. And indeed no scholar can study the literary, aesthetic, spiritual, psychological and intellectual trends of the period in the Arab world without taking into account the role of this important magazine, not only

in reflecting the various manifestations of the Arab mind but also in shaping its concepts of art and life. Because it rejected regionalism and ardently believed in Arab unity and the solidarity of the Arab struggle for freedom and progress, it helped greatly to assert the unity of Arab creativity and direct it all in one major stream. This, in itself, is a great achievement.[127] One cannot help, therefore, but feel regret at its incapacity to sustain a truly avant-garde position by eventually rejecting to be a record of reactionary manifestations in art, politics, and life in general, at the presence of some retarding streaks in the magazine, the occasional love of sensationalism, of bravado, of fanaticism, the occasional publication of unscholarly discussions and of articles that manifested bias, or aggression against the integrity or character of other writers and poets and of occasional criticism of low standard. But its achievements far outweigh its faults.

Shi'r was a more professional avant-garde magazine dedicated to poetry. It was a quarterly founded in Beirut in 1957. Its founder, Yūsuf al-Khāl, (1917), is a Lebanese poet and writer with definite views on poetry. He had studied at the American University of Beirut, had lived for some time in America, was in full touch with English and American literatures, and was deeply attached to Western culture as a whole.[128] With the aid of a group of poets and critics some of whom were soon to rise to artistic eminence, he directed the activities of the magazine, annexing to it a publishing firm and reinforcing its activities by holding a platform of oral discussion every Thursday evening which he called "Khamīs Majallat Shi'r" or "Al-Khamīs" as it was sometimes called by the poets. Right from the beginning the magazine showed equal interest in Western poetry, and was soon forging links with the poetic events of the century as they manifested themselves in England, America and France; but other fields were also explored whenever the language barriers were overcome. Its

interest in world poetry did not show a particular interest in the Socialist contribution on the whole, although some Socialist poets such as Eluard and Aragon were eventually translated.[129] The poetic tradition it attempted to evolve was based on the aesthetic concepts of the modern liberal Western poetic tradition with such poets as T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and Saint John Perce figuring strongly in it.[130]

One may say that Shi'r is a finer successor to Apollo.[131] But when it appeared, the poetic scene had changed considerably. New sources of moral, aesthetic, and emotional courage had been opened for poetry, and it was slowly forging its way to new horizons of technique and approach. When Shi'r came into existence, it found an avant-garde movement in full swing trying to cleave its way towards a clearer vision of aesthetics, and it supported and directed it, attempting to achieve this undisturbed by dogmatic opinion, sentimental tendencies, conventional sanctimony, or a lingering semi-mystical creed of ideal beauty which was the heritage of nineteenth century French Symbolism. It aspired, moreover, to help poetry to discover human values and attitudes and to re-state them in modern terms. One of its greatest achievements was the definition it gave to the avant-garde poetic movement. It had defined itself at the beginning as an experiment in form in which free verse was applied with limited variety. But it was soon outstripping its initial boundaries, as has been explained. Shi'r tried to evaluate what was happening and to give it a definition. As has been mentioned above,[132] Yūsuf al-Khāl gave it the name of "Al-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth".

The magazine led the poetic discussions of the day as Apollo had done in the early thirties. The main difference between the two from this point of view was that while the poetic theories of the thirties far outstripped the poetic output, the fifties were marked by a poetic creativity that outshone the poetic concepts realised by the poets. The

experimentalists backed by a modern evolving tradition and a wealth of poetic concepts into which they had been born, went forward on their discoveries of the poetic possibilities, prompted by a keen artistic instinct which rose from the demands of the poetic art itself. The serious, highly advanced studies which Shi'r published on the poetic theory helped to clarify these concepts and deepen the understanding of the task of poetry, with relevance to the modern avant-garde movement.[133] Shi'r declared the movement to be an overall attempt at change. Its core, it declared, was the human condition. It showed how Symbolism had taken on a different and more modern meaning, and ceasing to be an ideal of an abstract world of beauty was linking itself with life and borrowing its symbols from history, mythology and folk-lore. Shi'r defined these trends and greatly encouraged the use of myth in poetry, a reminder of Apollo's role in this field.[134]

Essays on practical criticism constantly appeared on its pages. These were based on those same poetic concepts which it expounded and promoted.[135] Unlike Al-Ādāb which tried to reflect the diverse aesthetic concepts of the Arab mind by publishing conflicting essays on the poetic movement, giving scope even for conventional ideas to assert themselves over and over again, Shi'r insisted on being the enlightened forum in which the avant-garde movement could display its explorations and manifest its experiments without fear of shallow unlearned evaluations, or hasty attacks from fanatics. The atmosphere of Shi'r immediately took on an air of exclusiveness and dignity, and without turning its back on free arguments of good standard, barred from its pages all attempts to vulgarise the aims and methods of a young aesthetic movement which it supported with partiality and dedication. Like Apollo it never fell into the traditional habit of preferences and false glorifications, although a clannish spirit could be felt in it at times. But the magazine's

dimensions were wide enough to allow for any experiments and any talent to manifest itself fully as long as it was genuine. But unauthorised young hopefuls who had no real talent could not as a rule be admitted. The magazine tried, as far as possible, to keep to a dignified and responsible latitude.

At the beginning, Shi'r was able to recruit most of the leading poetic talents of the Arab world;[136] but by the end of the fifties it had begun to be a target for the attacks of those who saw in some of its adherents and editors anti-Arab dissenters whose aim was not the promotion of a definite aesthetic concept, but of subversive anti-Arab attitudes.[137] The fact that the magazine encouraged and forecast drastic ideas on language and poetry, the fact that it must have appeared more right-wing and more aligned to American and West European liberal concepts of poetry and art, did not help the issue. It gradually fell into disrepute as the sixties advanced.* But examining the pages of the magazine, one can find little which is actually subversive, although the editors of Shi'r, when writing about the Classical literature, did not appear to be well informed or enthusiastic. Their literary perspective as regards the Classical heritage was neither deep nor representative of a continuous concept of the development of Arabic poetry throughout the ages. Their ideas concerning the Classical language and their insistence on its rigidity and on the vitality of the colloquial,[138] seem paradoxical in view of the fact that the most prominent among them such as al-Khāl and Adūnīs were completely unable to show in their poetry any authentic leanings towards the colloquial, or any borrowing from broad folk-lore,

* Shi'r appeared until the autumn of 1964, then was suspended. A year before, in the summer of 1963, Adūnīs, who was one of its chief editors, had left the magazine and the group. Many other poets had been lost to the magazine, apparently because of the subversive attacks of its enemies. Shi'r reappeared in 1967.

except in very few instances, and, in the case of Adūnīs, in none at all. His poetic language is tightly related to the Classical language and leans heavily on it. Yet he repeated, like al-Khāl and others among the group the same plaintive complaint against the language of poetry at the time. When one remembers that these writers against the use of the Classical language in modern poetry were very ambitious poets at the same time, one cannot help asking the question: How can these poets wish to destroy what they create? But the answer may lie in the discrepancy between theory and practice and in the embarrassingly paradoxical situation the modern Arab poet found himself in as heir to an Arabic poetry not yet completely liberated from traditional motifs and expressions, and an ultra modern European poetry. In their case, there is no doubt as to where their preference lay. But this might have been an aesthetic preference stemming from a deeper affinity with Western culture and from weaker cultural roots in the Arab Classics. At any rate the question of loyalties and political affinities is beyond the scope of this work, except where it manifests itself in the poetic and critical contribution. Here one must be able to see that through the efforts of this magazine a great place for serious poetry was secured; a poetry concerned with vital changes aspiring to enter the stream of world poetry fully equipped with all the modern tools of a poet's art.[139]

Footnotes

1. On him as a thinker see Ghāli Shukri, Salāmah Mūsā wa Azmat al-Damīr al-'Arabi, Sidon-Beirut, 1965; and Maḥmūd al-Sharqāwi, Salāmah Mūsā, al-Mufakkir wa 'l-Insān, Beirut, 1965. On his life, see his autobiographical book The Education of Salāma Mūsā translated by L.O. Schuman, Leiden, 1961.

2. See for example his book Al-Adab li 'l-Sha'b, Cairo, 1961, his two chapters "Al-Adab al-Mulūki wa 'l-Adab al-Sha'bi", pp.37-45 and 46-55.

3. He writes often on this; for a single example see his interesting chapter "Al-Adab li 'l-Sha'b", ibid., pp.24-30; see also al-Sharqāwi, op.cit., pp.165-70 for an interpretation of his ideas on language.

4. It is interesting to read him saying that it was he who introduced the phrase "poverty, ignorance and sickness" into literature in his defence of the down-trodden masses; see op.cit., pp.164-5. This phrase became a stock convention in realistic writings in the fifties.

5. Al-Sharqāwi's book gives a good interpretation of his ideas on literature, language and committed writing. See also his other books Maqalāt Mamnū'ah, Beirut, 1959, and Mukhtārāt Salāmah Mūsā, Cairo, n.d.

6. On him see M. 'Abbūd, Judud wa Qudamā', his two chapters, "'Umar Fākhūri", pp.211-4, and "Fī Dhikrā 'Umar", pp.220-2; Ra'īf al-Khouri, Al-Adab al-Mas'ūl, Beirut, 1968, his chapter, "Hākadhā 'Allamanā 'Umar Fākhūri", pp.211-5; M.Y. Najm, "Al-Funūn al-Adabiyyah", pp.378-80; and others.

7. Al-Adīb, January, 1942, his article "Yanābī' al-Adab".

8. Al-Adab al-Mas'ūl, "Al-Tawjīh fi 'l-Adab", pp.123-34. This essay had appeared in 1955 in Al-Ādāb (the August number).

9. Ibid., p.40.

10. Ibid., pp.47-8.

11. Ibid., pp.58-9.

12. Ibid.

13. Entitled "Al-Adīb Yaktubu li 'l-Khāṣṣah"; see the whole lecture reprinted in ibid., pp.104-19; see al-Khouri's debate with him, "Al-Adīb Yaktubu li 'l-'Āmmah", ibid., pp.89-103.

14. Ibid., p.97.

15. See several numbers of Al-Ādāb for rejoinders and discussions revolving around this debate; aside from the rejoinder by al-Khouri himself in ibid, August, 1955, (above mentioned,) see several rejoinders in the July number of Al-Ādāb, 1955, entitled "Liman Yaktub al-Adīb?", by several writers; see also an interesting article by Maurice Ṣaqr, entitled "Ṭāhā Ḥusain fī Munāẓarātihi wa Kutubihi", Al-Ādāb, June, 1955, pp.7-10, in which the writer brings out the contradictions he sees in the ideas of Ṭāhā Ḥusain on the subject as put forth in his debate and in several of his previous books.

16. Al-Adab al-Mas'ūl, loc.cit., et passim.

17. Asked for his opinion on innovation in recent Arabic poetry he answered: "Innovation... stemmed from the incapacity /of the poets/ and their weak poetic roots"; see Lisān al-Ḥāl newspaper, Beirut, No.20028, 28th March, 1965, p.6.

18. On him and his criticism, see the introduction to his collected essays, Al-Adab al-Mas'ūl, by Mīshāl Sulaimān, pp.7-13; see also Al-Ādāb, December, 1967, for several essays on him; also ibid., July 1968, for an article by Shukri Faiṣal, entitled "Ra'īf al-Khouri fī Sīratihi 'l-Fikriyyah", pp.9-10.

19. From Al-Adab fi 'l-Maidān as quoted by Najm, op.cit., p.381.

20. A brief look at some literary magazines during the early fifties shows the important place this question occupied. Al-Ādāb was a major platform, with the many articles it published and the questionnaires it conducted; see for example its questionnaires "For whom and why do you Write?", November, 1954, and "Literature and Politics", December, 1954.

21. The Triple Thinkers, p.197.

22. Dirāsāt Naqdiyyah fī Ḍau' al-Manhaj al-Wāqi'i, Beirut, 1965, p.417.

23. Fi 'l-Thaqāfah al-Miṣriyyah, Beirut, 1955, pp.36-7.

24. Ibid., p.37.

25. Ibid., pp.39-40.

26. Ibid., p.98.

27. Ibid., p.101.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p.102.

30. Ibid., pp.44 and 48.

31. See his section on the modern Egyptian novel, pp.145-204; see especially p.165.

32. See ibid., p.159.

33. Ibid., p.31.

34. Ibid., p.32.

35. Ibid., p.17.

36. See what Najm says about this point, op.cit., pp.377-8.

37. P.12.

38. Aside from his introductions to his books of criticism, and other writings, see the interview with him published in Lisān al-Ḥāl, No.20004, February 28th, 1965, p.6.

39. For a single example of his efforts in the field see his translated work, Al-Adab wa 'l-Fann fī Ḍau' al-Wāqi'iyyah, Cairo, 1955.

40. His interview in Al-Ādāb, January, 1961, pp.38-9.

41. On Socialist culture, see Luwīs 'Awaḍ, Dirāsāt fi 'l-Naqd wa 'l-Adab, Beirut, 1963, his chapter "Al-Thaqāfah al- Ishtirākiyyah", pp.141-9; Iḥasān 'Abbās Fann al-Shi'r, his chapter, "Al-Wāqi'iyyah al-Ḥadīthah", pp.121-37. N.B. 'Awaḍ is promoting a Socialist culture in his chapter, while 'Abbās is describing the movement.

42. A very good example of these is the Egyptian critic Rajā' al-Naqqāsh; see his book Adab wa ʿUrūbah wa Ḥurriyyah, Cairo, 1962, in which the notions of nationalism and Socialism are combined.

43. When Nāzik al-Malā'ikah in 1953 published her essay on "Poetry and Society", it was clear that she understood the call to be aligned with nationalism and patriotism, not with class struggle; see "Al-Shiʿr wa 'l-Mujtamaʿ", Qadāyā, pp.261-9, especially 266 and 268.

44. This influence, although by no means written about or traced fully as it manifested itself in modern Arabic poetry, has nevertheless been recognised by some writers as important (see the discussion of N. Maḥfūẓ, A. Badawi and L. ʿAwad on Arabic literature in the light of modern trends, "Adabunā 'l-Muʿāṣir fī Ḍau' al-Tayyārāt al-Falsafiyyah", Al-Ādāb, March, 1962, pp.110 and 111), and even as representing the major influence on modern Arabic literature (see ibid., the essay of Iḥsān ʿAbbās, "Al-Ittijāhāt al-Falsafiyyah fi 'l-Adab al-ʿArabi 'l-Muʿāṣir", p.12).

45. From his interesting informative essay: "Existentialism - a Literature of Despair?", reprinted from Yale French Studies, Spring-Summer, 1949, I, i, 29.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. What is Literature?, translated by Bernard Frechtman, London, 1950, pp.194-5. Compare with al-Khouri's ideas in his attack on Soviet literary policy, op.cit., pp.127-30.

49. From I. Deutscher's introduction to chapter 17 of The Age of Permanent Revolution: a Trotsky Anthology, ed. by I. Deutscher, New York, a Laurel edition, 1964, pp.299-300; on him see also E. Wilson, The Triple Thinkers, pp.191-3. However, Wilson misunderstood him, see above p.17.

50. Op.cit., p.56.

51. Ibid., pp.26-7.

52. Ibid., p.56.

53. Op.cit., p.31.

54. What is Literature?, pp.211-2.

55. See ibid., pp.186 et seq. On p.186 he describes their "social and professional culture". The interpretation of Sartre's ideas on commitment began early in the fifties and continued; see an article by Anwar al-Maʿaddāwi, "Al-Adab al-Multazim", Al-Ādāb, February, 1953, pp.12-5; see also a later one by M.G. Hilāl, "Falsafat al-Adab ʿind Sartre", Al-Ādāb, March, 1962, pp.26-30.

56. Shākir Muṣṭafa in Al-Ādāb's regular feature, "Qara'tu 'l-ʿAdad al-Māḍi min Al-Ādāb", February, 1961, p.7.

57. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, Qadāyā, pp.262-7.

58. Nizār Qabbāni, "Maʿrakat al-Yamīn wa 'l-Yasār fi 'l-Shiʿr al-ʿArabi", Al-Maʿrifah magazine, Damascus, March, 1962, 98-9.

59. The present writer, "Baina 'l-Ḥaqīqah wa 'l-Fann", Al-Anwār paper, Beirut, No.219, May 8th, 1960, p.6; see also another discussion by the present writer on art and politics, "Al-Siyāsah wa 'l-Fann", ibid., No.243, June 5th, 1960, p.6.

60. Al-Bayyāti declared later: "There was a time when I believed there was no contradiction between free human commitment and political commitment." However, he explains, he had later acquired a new vision towards the world and man. "I discovered" he said, "that there is a contradiction between the two." From an interview published in Lisān al-Ḥāl paper, Beirut, No.19904, October 30th, 1964, p.9.

61. See for example an essay by the present writer, "Al-Khalq al-Fanni", Al-Anwār, No.276, July 10th, 1960, p.6.

62. Ibid.

63. Rene Ḥabashi, "Al-Shi'r fī Ma'rakat al-Wujūd", Shi'r quarterly, No.1, Winter, 1957, pp.91-3.

64. Adūnīs in an interview in the appendix to Al-Jarīdah newspaper, Beirut, No.3825, p.9, says that a poet cannot hate.

65. See also what B.S. al-Sayyāb says on commitment in his lecture, "Al-Iltizām wa 'l-lā-Iltizām fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth", Al-Adab al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āsir, Paris, 1962, which is a record of the Conference on modern Arabic literature held at Rome, 16-20 October, 1961, pp. 239-55.

66. "Al-Ḥurriyyah wa 'l-Ṭūfān", Al-Ḥurriyyah wa 'l-Ṭūfān, Beirut, 1960, pp.22-3. See also I. Ismā'īl, "Al-Iltizām wa 'l-Thauriyyah", Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āsir, pp.373-415.

67. What is Literature? p.10. For further discussions on the relationship between literature and society see F.W. Bateson, "Poetry and Society", English Poetry, a Critical Introduction, second edition, London, 1966, pp.57-72; E. Wilson, "Marxism and Literature", The Triple Thinkers, pp.188-202; G. Bullough, "Metaphysicals and Left-Wingers", The Trend of Modern Poetry, third edition, pp.183-212; this chapter, however, is an interpretation of the left-wing movement in English poetry in the thirties.

68. The present writer, "Arabic Poetry in the Fifties", Arab Review, London, April, 1960, III, i, 13. See also I. al-'Urayyiḍ, "Al-Shi'r wa Qaḍiyyatuhu fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth", Al-Abḥāth, June, 1954, VII, ii, 176-8, where he describes the audience of contemporary Arabic poetry; see also his interesting book, Al-Asālīb al-Shi'riyyah, which deals with the different roles of the poet, as well as with the poetic tone, a unique contribution in Arabic.

69. The well-known attacks by the Dīwān group, the Apollo group and by critics like Mandūr and Nu'aimah have already been discussed.

70. References are many, but a lecture delivered by Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā on "Modern Arabic Poetry" on the 26th November, 1968, at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University (Conference Room), repeated the same argument.

71. Compare with T.S. Eliot's discussion of the three voices of poetry. His second voice compares only loosely with the voice of platform poetry in Arabic because of the poet's personal involvement in the latter; see The Three Voices of Poetry, London, 1953, p.15.

72. See a poem in monorhymed quatrains by the Syrian poetess, 'Azīzah Hārūn, Al-Thaqāfah, Damascus, June, 1959, II, i, 15.

73. Mandūr mentions that the Poetry Committee in Cairo (of which al-'Aqqād was chairman), made it a condition that poems contributed to a poetry festival be in the monorhymed two hemistich form, which resulted in many "traditional poems which were even pre-Islamic in their texture"; see "Al-Shi'r al-Jadīd fī Naẓar al-Naqd al-Jadīd", Al-Ādāb, January, 1961, p.8.

74. The Speaking of Poetry, London, 1937, p.92.

75. Ibid., p.21.

76. English Poetry: a Critical Introduction, p.57.

77. Rylands, Words and Poetry, p.34.

78. See above pp. 750-5.

79. Practical Criticism, p.234.

80. Pp.271-2.

81. In the poetry festival at Damascus, 1959, there were at least twenty-seven poems. With the exception of two poems on Spring (Al-Thaqāfah, ibid., pp.22 and 123)by the Egyptian poets Jalīlah Riḍā and Maḥmūd ʿImād, and one on an orphan child by the Syrian poetess ʿAzīzah Hārun, (ibid., p.15 and continued on p.54), and a fourth on love by the Syrian poet Salīm al-Zirikli (ibid., pp.46-7), the rest were on direct national themes. Of these, eleven were on the unity between Egypt and Syria (effected in 1958) and six were on the bloody events in Iraq under ʿAbd al-Karīm Qāsim. Although less in number, the latter were the more fiery ones because the issue of Iraq was very pressing at the time.

82. Op.cit., p.253.

83. Ibid., p.244.

84. Ibid., p.245.

85. Copy of poem given to the present writer by courtesy of Al-Jamāhīr paper, Damascus, at the time of the festival.

86. Al-Thaqāfah, ibid., p.53.

87. Words and Poetry, p.33.

88. From a poem by Saʿīd Elissa entitled "Aṭlāl Jarash" given by him to the present writer.

89. Op.cit., p.37.

90. The poem was given to the present writer by courtesy of Al-Jamāhīr paper, Damascus, at the time of the festival.

91. This word appears, however, in the twenty-ninth verse.

92. See Rylands, op.cit., pp.17-8 for his analysis of the use of the word 'glory' in English.

93. Al-Thaqāfah, ibid., p.33.

94. Al-Tajdīd fi 'l-Shiʿr al-Miṣri 'l-Ḥadīth, p.111.

95. From Ṭalʿat al-Rifāʿi's poem, op.cit., p.32.

96. See Al-Aqlām magazine, April, 1965, for a large number of platform poems read at the sixth poetry festival held at Baghdad in 1965. A great deal of banality and repetitiveness dominates this collection.

97. Examples from al-Jawāhiri are many; for a few see his poem "Yaumu 'l-Shahīd", Dīwān al-Jawāhiri, Vol.II, 110-45; and his poem "Akhi Jaʿfar", Dīwān al-Jawāhiri, fourth edition, 1957, pp.173-84. See also the many diwans of Sulaimān al-ʿĪssa.

98. "Ma'rakat al-Yamīn wa 'l-Yasār fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi", pp.92-100.

99. For another example of these see a lecture by Adūnīs, "Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi wa Mushkilat al-Tajdīd", delivered at the Conference of Contemporary Arabic Literature held at Rome, October 16-22, 1961, published in Shi'r, quarterly, No.21, Winter, 1962, pp.90-106. Above reference is on p.92.

100. Op.cit., p.93.

101. Ibid., p.94; see also Nāzik al-Malā'ikah's description of the 'flat structure' in poetry which she asserts has characterised the Classical lyrical poetry. However, Nāzik does not limit this to the old poetry but insists that it is true of much of modern Arabic poetry and, ironically, gives as an example a poem by Qabbāni himself, implying later that a good part of his poetry is of this structure; see Qaḍāyā, pp.209-11.

102. Loc.cit.; see also Adūnīs, op.cit., p.95.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid., p.97.

105. Op.cit., p.96.

106. The present writer in an essay entitled "Al-Adīb al-Thauri wa 'l-Mauqif al-Ḥaḍāri", Al-Ādāb, January, 1960, pp.12-4 & 99-100; above reference is on p.12; see also I. Ismā'īl "Al-Shi'r baina 'l-'Aṣriyyah wa 'l-Turāth", Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi al-Mu'āṣir, pp.9-40.

107. Ibid., p.14.

108. In answer to a questionnaire, "Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi baina 'l-Taqyīd wa 'l-Taḥrīr", by Al-Ādāb, August, 1953, p.23. The questionnaire, directed to several poets and critics, dealt with their opinion on the freedom of poetry from what some modern poets and critics called the shackles of the traditional form. See also the answer of other writers on the subject. It is interesting to see Nizār Qabbāni, writing in 1953, asserting the necessity of the rhyme, and insisting that the problem of Arabic poetry is not a problem of form but of imitativeness. He was then still writing mostly in the traditional form. Compare with his much more developed ideas in his essay "Ma'rakat al-Yamīn wa 'l-Yasār fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi".

109. This was a genuine regret on the part of Badawi al-Jabal. He believed that free verse was a passing vogue which was diverting the energy of young poets. This he told to the present writer on several occasions between 1954 and 1960.

110. In another questionnaire, "Mustaqbal al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth", Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.6.

111. Ilyās Qunṣul in the questionnaire, "Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi baina 'l-Taqyīd wa 'l-Taḥrīr", p.74.

112. 'Azīz Abāẓah in a lecture at the University of Damascus, January [6th?], 1961; see the argument of the present writer in which his many accusations against modern poetry are refuted: "Mazāliq al-Ḥamlah al-Rij'iyyah 'ala 'l-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth", Al-Wahdah paper, Damascus, No.613, 13th January, 1961, pp.3 & 7.

113. Loc.cit.

114. Ibid.

115. He published it first in Al-Majallah magazine, Cairo, October, 1961, then included it in his collected essays Falsafah wa Fann, pp.345-51.

116. Ibid., p.350.

117. Ibid., p.351; see also al-Malā'ikah, Qaḍāyā, p.202, where she alludes to the rigour and terseness of the good poetic form.

118. Shi'r, No.21, Winter, 1962, p.125.

119. He published this in Al-Majallah magazine, No.58, November, 1961; the argument was paraphrased in Shi'r, No.21, Winter, 1962, pp.120-1.

120. Ibid., pp.121-3, where it is paraphrased; originally published in Al-Majallah, No.58, November, 1961; the same points are recounted in his later book, Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi al-Mu'āṣir, pp.13-6.

121. Shi 'r, No.21, Winter, 1962, p.127, quoting Adūnīs.

122. Ibid.

123. Ibid., p.129.

124. See his essay "Waqfat Shā'ir" on the third diwan of Adūnīs, Aghāni Mihyār al-Dimashqi, (1962), published in Al-Thaqāfah, Cairo, May 19th, 1964, pp.13-6; see also Al-Fikr al-Mu'āṣir, the magazine which he edits, for other examples of his championship of modern verse.

125. Even Nāzik al-Malā'ikah felt misgivings at the onslaught of bad examples of free verse in the late fifties; see her article "Al-'Arūḍ al-'Ām li 'l-Shi'r al-Ḥurr", Al-Ādāb, February, 1958, pp.6-7 and 76-8.

126. This was well established in 1960; see an article by the present writer in Al-Anwār, No.300, August 7th, 1960, p.6, in answer to a questionnaire by Al-Ḥurriyyah magazine, Beirut, on the subject.

127. In the earlier years of the magazine, there did take place some arguments, showing some regional bias between the Egyptian Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr on one side, and the Iraqi Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb and Kāẓim Jawād on the other; see Al-Ādāb, the July, August, September and October numbers of 1955, under "Munāqashāt". The arguments were puerile and uninspiring. But such attitudes disappeared by the end of the fifties, helped largely by the growth of Arab nationalism and by the ceaseless efforts of Al-Ādāb to enhance it on literary basis; for a summary of Al-Ādāb's history and role see Ghāli Shukri, "Ṣirā' al-Mutanāqiḍāt fī Ṣufūf al-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth", Hiwār, No.20, January, 1966, pp.78-9, 81, 85-6 & 92.

128. For a single example see the open letter sent by al-Khāl to the present writer when she was editor of the literary page in Al-Anwār, published in Al-Anwār, No.237, May 29th, 1960, p.6. In this letter, al-Khāl's admiration for European culture and life is manifest.

129. A translation of thirteen poems by Paul Eluard was published in Shi 'r, No.27, Summer, 1963, with a study of the poet. Both the translation and the study were made by 'Iṣām Mahfūẓ, pp.52-80; a translation of Louis Aragon appeared in ibid., the 31-32 number, Summer-Autumn, 1964, pp.7-104, also accompanied by a study of the poet. The translation and the study were made by the Shi'r editorial board. These translations seem belated in view of the fact that these two Socialist poets were very popular with many avant-garde poets in the fifties such as al-Bayyāti.

130. The major foreign poets who appeared in Shi'r between 1957-1960 are the following:

1.	Ezra Pound	No.1, Winter,	1957,	pp.73-81,	by Shi'r.
2.	Emily Dickenson	" "	"	pp.82-7,	" "
3.	T.S. Eliot "Ash Wednesday"	No.2, Spring,	"	pp.51-66,	" Munīr Bashshūr.
4.	Yves Bonnefoy	" "	"	pp.67-74	" Shi'r.
5.	Edith Sitwell	No.3, Summer,	"	pp.69-72	" J.I. Jabrā.
6.	Saint John Perse	No.4, Autumn,	"	pp.38-89	" Adūnīs.
7.	T.S. Eliot Murder in the Cathedral	No.5, Winter,	1958,	pp.33-76	No mention of translator.
8.	Paul Claudel	No.6, Spring,	"	pp.49-97	by R. Ḥabashi and Adūnīs.
9.	Walt Whitman	No.7-8, Summer-Spring,	"	pp.44-56	" Shi'r.
10.	Jules Supervielle	No.9, Winter,	1959,	pp.48-66	" G. Khouri & H.Abi Ṣāliḥ.
11.	Jacques Provert	" "	"	pp.67-85	" F.Ṭarabulsi & U. al-Ḥaj.
12.	Dylan Thomas	No.10,Spring,	"	pp.54-73	" Nadhīr 'Aẓmah
13.	Arthur Rimbeau	No.11,Summer	"	pp.32-57	" Shauqi Abi Shaqrā.
14.	W.B. Yeats	" "	"	pp.58-78	" Fu'ād Rifqah.
15.	Shakespeare	No.12,Autumn,	"	pp.31-74	" J.I. Jabrā.
16.	P. Valery	" "	"	pp.75-89	" Muṣṭafā al-Khaṭīb.
17.	S. Quasimodo	No.13,Winter,	1960,	pp.48-78	" 'Īsā al-Nā'ūri.
18.	W. Blake	No.14,Spring,	"	pp.57-74	" J.I. Jabrā.
19.	Pierre Jean Jouve,	No.15,Summer,	"	pp.70-90	" Adūnīs.
20.	Antonin Artaud	No.16,Autumn,	"	pp.69-106	" Unsi al-Ḥaj.

131. See above, pp.533-9.

132. See above, p. 814.

133. See Al-Shi'r fī Ma'rakat al-Wujūd which is a collection of some of these essays published in the magazine; Beirut, 1960; see also Al-Baḥth 'an al-Judhūr, Beirut, 1960, which is a collection of the essays of Khālidah Sa'īd, one of the magazine's foremost critics. See also numbers of Shi'r for more essays, especially after 1960. For the concept of modern poetry as evolved by Shi'r, see the summary of Y. al-Khāl's lecture, in ibid., I, Spring, 1957, pp.96-9; see also a paraphrasing of this concept as evolved by F. Rifqah from Khālidah Sa'īd's several essays . Shi'r, No.14, Spring, 1960, pp.86-7; see also the essay of Adūnīs, ibid., No.11, Summer, 1959, pp.79-90.

134. See As'ad Razzūq, Al-Usṭūrah fi 'l-Shi'r al-Mu'āṣir, al-Shu'arā' al-Tammūziyyūn, Beirut, 1959, which is a discussion of the use of the myth of Tammūz or Adonīs as exemplified by the Shi'r poets and others.

135. The essays of Khālidah Sa'īd are all on practical criticism; others are found in Al-Shi'r fī Ma'rakat al-Wujūd and scattered in the various numbers of the magazine.

136. See Shi'r, No.31-32, Summer-Autumn, 1964, p.5 for a list of the poets and critics who appeared in the magazine between 1957 and 1964.

137. One of the most severe critics of the magazine and its poets was the Egyptian critic Rajā' al-Naqqāsh; see his essay, "Hal li 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi al-Jadīd Falsafah?", Al-Ādāb, March, 1962, p.38; his book Adab wa 'Urūbah wa Hurriyyah, [illegible] four vehement [illegible] essays all entitled "Al-Qaumiyyūh al-Sūriyyūn wa 'l-Adab", pp.47-81, in which he attacked violently the editors of Shi'r especially Adūnīs. Another critic who attacked them was Nāzik al-Malā'ikah. She mentions the "European spirit" of the magazine and chides it for its encouragement of what its critics call "prose poetry" and what al-Malā'ikah calls simply prose; see Qadāyā, p.183 et seq. In her argument on the language of poetry, p.291, she refers to these as the Lebanese school, a rather loose term because several among these poets were not Lebanese (e.g. Nadhīr 'Aẓmah from whom she quotes) and secondly because the spirit of experimentation in the language of poetry is not represented best by the Lebanese in general. In fact the Lebanese were already developing towards increased Classicism in language as their contemporary prose contribution and some of their poetry show. See for examples of Lebanese prose the writings of Amīn Nakhlah, Mishāl Asmar, Sa'īd 'Aql, Kamāl al-Ḥaj, Anṭūn Ghaṭṭās Karam, Khalīl Rāmiz Sarkīs, and many others. Lebanon's most representative poets, moreover, do not show any leanings towards imitating the language of daily conversation as the poetry of Khalīl Ḥāwi, Yūsuf al-Khāl (whose adaptation of some colloquial usage was intentional and inconsistent, singled out immediately in a poetry which otherwise has no real affinity with the colloquial) Rafīq Ma'lūf, Rafīq Khouri, Josaif Nujaim and many others. Another poet who attacked the magazine was Muhammad al-Maghūṭ who was originally introduced to the public by the magazine, but came to blows with it in 1962. See his bitter attack on it in Al-Ādāb, January, 1962, pp.57-9.

138. For two examples see the essay of Adūnīs, "Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi wa Mushkilat al-Tajdīd", Shi'r, No.21, Winter, 1962, his discussion of the Classical Arabic language, p.96; see also the farewell manifesto of Yūsuf al-Khāl on declaring his intention of suspending Shi'r, ibid., No.31-32, Summer-Autumn, 1964, pp.7-8, in which he asserts that the avant-garde movement stopped at the wall of the language, because it is a language that is written and not spoken.

139. For a concise assessment of this important magazine see Ghāli Shukri, op.cit., pp.86-7; however, Shukri does not discuss, as he did when discussing Al-Ādāb, Shi'r's negative attitudes.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE NEW POETRY

Many difficulties and dangers arise when one tries to assess the achievements of the modern movement in Arabic poetry. Despite the impression one gets that great changes have taken place in poetry during the past two decades, the major experiments in this poetry have not been completed yet, and some probably have not yet begun. When an art is still in the process of vital experimentation, a decisive definition of its processes should not be attempted, because artistic change is dependent on creative genius which often eludes an attempt to prefigure its development. It is also deeply influenced by social and cultural developments, and in the light of what one feels to be great impending changes in the Arab world both on the cultural and on the social levels, the assessment of the poetic achievements of this unfinished period can only be limited. In a future period, the perspective will be longer, and critics and literary historians will be able to see more clearly than we can ever do now the genuine achievements of this period, differentiate the original experimentalists from the mere imitators, and discover which of the poets and the critics of poetry in this period had the greater influence on the poets of his generation and the generations following. Many reputations, one feels, will crumble, some will be enhanced and the true worth of the more authentic poetic contributions will be seen better when much of the artificial noise created by some critics, poets, and critical amateurs will die down.

The following chapter proposes to discuss the development of the poetic technique so far achieved in the last two decades. It will show that Arabic poetry has been able to undergo changes in all the elements of poetry and not only in the element of form, as it is generally believed by traditionalists. The further achievement in form will be discussed at greater length. Other elements will be tone and attitudes (elements

rarely examined by critics), theme, diction, imagery and the use of obliquities (symbol, allusion, folklore, myth and archetype), as well as the poetic aspect of dramatic poetry.

Although it is the poetry of the last two decades which is discussed here, this conclusive chapter will point, where relevant, to the steady line of development in various poetic elements since the beginning of the century. Whatever has been gained for Arabic poetry in the last two decades is not the exclusive attainment of the current period, but is the achievement of all contemporary Arabic poetry.

SECTION 1: FORM

(i) Further Experiments in Free Verse.

The discovery in the late forties of the possibilities in utilising Arabic metres for writing a freer kind of poetry was only the beginning of intensive experimentation in the form of the Arabic poem. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah was undoubtedly the first critic who tried to assess the movement and show the young Arab poet its prosodical significance. Her early, rather tentative explanation of the new technique in the form of what she, and others after her, called 'free verse' in Arabic developed later into a more systematic and defined evaluation of what she believed to be the prosodical limits of this poetic form. She expressed her ideas in several essays written over the years and published successively in literary magazines especially in Al-Ādāb. In 1962 she collected her various studies of modern Arabic poetry in her famous book Qadāyā 'l-Shi'r al-Mu'āsir which may well be regarded as the most controversial book of criticism on modern Arabic literature. This book gave rise to a great deal of controversy, creating a critical activity unprecedented in modern times, and imposing on the critics of the period the necessity of examining the great prosodical adventure on which modern Arabic poetry had embarked. All this took place in the sixties after Qadāyā came out. In the fifties, however, one cannot help feeling deeply astonished at the apparent lack of any real prosodical awareness of what was going on in verse. It was apparent also that the poets themselves, in their experimentation, were driven more by their creative instincts than by a good grasp of the prosodical laws and potentialities. Aside from Nāzik's efforts in this field, efforts which showed commendable concern and great courage and confidence, only a very few writers concerned themselves with this aspect,[1] in spite of the fact that the change in form was the element most discussed, in general non-technical terms, by all. However, even

Nāzik herself gradually changed her initial avant-garde and adventurous attitude and adopted a more cautious approach. This appears to have stemmed from two sources. Firstly from the fact that her strong Classical roots began to reassert themselves before the onslaught of so much bad "free verse" at the end of the fifties; and secondly her feelings became more and more aroused by the many dissident political involvements (real and imaginary) of poets and writers who called at the same time for greater freedom in the form and language of poetry. This caution on her part is rather disappointing, for Nāzik can be a superior technician herself. Her sincerity and brilliance, her delicate ear for the music of poetry, her deep love for this art, should have carried her through greater adventures in form. But in this book, she appeared to have regressed in favour of greater conservatism, and other avant-garde critics took her former elevated place as the foremost (and at one time the only) critic of the prosodical aspect of free verse. Her concept of the freedom allowed to the poet in this form, as seen in the sum total of her writings, may be summed up as follows: that the use of a varied number of feet in each line (she calls it shatr)[2] of poetry is the only freedom he has which differentiates this new form from that of the traditional two hemistich qaṣīdah. Otherwise, all the laws applicable to the two hemistich form apply equally to this form also. She says:

"والواقع ان الشعر الحر جار على قواعد العروض العربي ،ملتزم لها كل الالتـــزام وكل ما فيه من غرابة انه يجمع الوافي والمجزوء والمشطور جميعا . وصـــــداق ما نقول ان نتناول اية قصيدة جيدة من الشعر الحر ونعزل ما فيها من مجـــزوء ومشطور ،فلسوف ننتهي الى ان نحصل على قصيدتين جاريتين على الاسلوب العربـــي دون اية غرابة فيها ". [3]

However, critics could not accept her thesis, and began calling her reactionary.[4] Only one writer gave her her unmitigated support.[5] Others argued with her violently. Muḥammad al-Nuwaihi dedicated a large section of his book, Qadiyyat al-Shi'r al-Jadīd, to disprove many of her ideas on

the prosody of free verse.[6] Among the writers who also rejected her ideas were Yūsuf al-Khāl, J.I. Jabrā, 'Izziddīn Ismā'īl, Luwīs 'Awaḍ, and others.[7] They were strongly opposed to her attempt to put limitations on the freedom of poets to manipulate the prosodical structure of the poem. These limitations were seen by them to be shackles imposed on the creativity of the Arab poet. The poets are "still at the beginning of the road", said one writer, explaining that it is ludicrous to start putting laws to a poetry still in the stage of experimentation.[8] This warning was not the first of its kind, for Nāzik's tendency to impose laws on poetry and criticism was pointed out and warned against by some writers, as early as 1959.[9] But with the appearance of her book, the arguments took on a wider sphere, building their ideas on further experiments achieved by various poets. In fact, it is these constant experiments by the new poets which furnish the real proof of the vitality and potentialities of free verse. But one has to admit that critics like Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, who feel sincerely concerned about the maintenance of a level of correctness and awareness of technique in the poetic form and language are certainly entitled to voice their opinion. The warning against the sloppiness of numerous poets was well-guided, and al-Malā'ikah rendered a great service to modern Arabic poetry by warning against this and by showing the poets some of the pitfalls to be avoided in this new form of poetry. These will be discussed shortly. The fact that she was seized by a panic arising probably mainly from the special circumstances of the times and that she became more rigid in her views on the poetic form than befitted her basic creativity, should not diminish the vitality of her attempt to check the irresponsible attitude many poets showed in their practice.

Free Verse in Practice: The early practice of free verse concentrated on a simple variation of the number of feet from one line to

another. The first metre to gain great popularity in the fifties was al-kāmil, liberated first by al-Sayyāb and then adopted by other Iraqi poets such as 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyāti who utilized it greatly,[10] and Kāẓim Jawād. After al-kāmil, al-mutaqārab acquired a moderate popularity with al-kāmil. In 1955 al-rajaz began to be popular, and in 1956 al-khabab started gaining in popularity with al-rajaz, both arriving at great popularity in 1957 with al-rajaz in the lead.*

The rise in the popularity of al-khabab and al-rajaz is a great gain for poetry. Both metres had never enjoyed an elevated position in Classical times. Al-rajaz, aside from the myth connected with its origin being regarded by some literary historians as the origin of all Arabic metres, had quite a unique history. It was regarded less elevated than shi'r[11] and had lagged behind the more famous metres of the Classical Arabs, until modern times when poets started using it in poems with an emotional and subjective theme. Among these were 'Ali Maḥmūd Ṭāhā in his diwan

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* Perhaps the best source of study for this is Al-Ādāb. The following table illustrates the ratio of metres used, and the steadily increasing ratio of free poems written over five years:

	No. of poems	al-kāmil	al-mutaqārab	al-khabab	al-rajaz	No. of free poems
1953	90	37	14	2	1	25
1954	98	44	24	2	3	37
1955	99	30	16	2	10	39
1956	85	21	12	6	12	67
1957	110	16	8	24	32	80
	482	148	74	36	58	248

Al-ramal also gained popularity over the years in this ratio: 6:6:14:16:17, remaining moderately popular.. Al-sarī' had a mild popularity all through with a ratio of 9:6:6:9:7. Al-khafif, however, seemed to dwindle within those years having the ratio of 11:8:7:1:3. Other metres suitable for use in simple free verse were al-hazaj which was used only in five poems during those five years, and al-wāfir which was used fourteen times.

Sharq wa Gharb and Ilyās Abū Shabakah in Ghalwā'. In the fifties, poets made great use of it, exploiting its zihāfs and adding to the original forms of its darb several new forms hitherto unknown. The most important element that was renewed was that of theme, for it was now employed, following Abū Shabakah's initiation of this in rajaz, for the most tragic themes possible. Al-Sayyāb's famous poem "Unshūdat al-Maṭar" written in 1956, which is one of the most beautiful and most tragic poems of the fifties, is in al-rajaz metre.

In Classical rajaz, mustaf'ilun which is the metrical unit of this metre could also form its darb, but two other variations on the darb are also used: the first by qat' in which mustaf'ilun becomes mustaf'il, i.e. maf'ūlun,[12] and the second by both qat' and khabn so that it becomes fa'ūlun.[13] This last foot was greatly employed in contemporary rajaz.

But the contemporary poets introduced several other darb forms. In "Unshūdat al-Maṭar" al-Sayyāb used fa'ūl: ما مرّ عام والعراق ليس فيه جـوع and fa'al: عيناك غابتا نخيل ساعة السحـــر [14]. In "Sarbirūs fī Bābil" he also introduced mufā'ilān, which is formed by what is called tadhyīl in Arabic prosody and which is not employed in Classical rajaz. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah rejected this darb because it was not included in the Khalīlian metrics and because she herself found it "ugly".[15] She does not give any technical reason why it is so. Moreover, she does not comment on the frequent use of fa'al in the darb, despite the fact that it was not used in Classical rajaz either.

Another form introduced to the darb was mustaf'ilātun formed by tarfīl, i.e. by the addition of the long syllable tun to the original complete foot. This too is unorthodox, but this tarfīl is used in al-kāmil, and there appears to be absolutely no reason at all why modern poets should not use it in their rajaz, if they see fit.

These new forms of the darb have given a greater scope for variety

of rhythm in this metre, especially when a poet uses several of them in the same poem. Al-Malā'ikah here again rejects this kind of freedom, insisting that poets should stick to the same darb form throughout the whole poem. For this she gives again the same reasons as before: Classical usage, and the Arab ear which finds this abominable.[16] As for Classical usage, it is well known that the two hemistich form, because of its extreme symmetry, must deem it necessary to repeat itself throughout the poem, but there is no reason why a poet cannot break through this rigidity in free verse. The best proof of this is the popularity of the best examples of contemporary free poems written in rajaz and using many varieties of darb forms. Nāzik herself does not seem to like this metre, for she has not employed it either in Shazāyā or in Qarārat al-Maujah, (1957).

Contemporary poets have resorted to the use of zihāf in rajaz using khabn (a commendable zihāf in Classical poetry)[17] to change mustaf'ilun into mafā'ilun; as well as other zihāfs. It is rather disconcerting that in all the points which one finds to be a modern achievement of this metre, one clashes immediately with Nāzik's formulations, for here again she rejects the frequent use of zihāf,[18] utterly neglecting the suggestion made as early as 1959 that the frequent use of zihāf in rajaz gives it greater fluidity and an informal tone highly suitable for dramatic poetry because of its non-oratorical quality, its great flexibility, and proximity to the spoken language.[19] However, this effect of the great use of zihāf in rajaz and other metres was aptly used by the Egyptian poet Ṣalāh 'Abd al-Ṣabūr in his play Al-Hallāj (1965). What one has to remember in the use of zihāf in Arabic is that the original foot measure permits certain variations (such as the substitution of a short syllable for a long one, or of a long for two short syllables in specified pattern) which are customarily regarded as "elision", although there is no elision in the

actual words used in the foot. It cannot, therefore, be regarded as a "disease" of metrical measure, and so long as the poet is using correct words fitting accepted feet measures, there is no reason to prevent him from doing so.* Al-rajaz itself is noted by a specialist on the subject for its potential liberality in the use of zihāf.[20]

In fact, contemporary poets have used the zihāf intensively.** But

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* In this the Arab zihāf differs from the elision known in English. The latter is defined in The Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics as "a kind of fiction, two syllables being reckoned as one to make the line conform to the metrical scheme", and quoting S.E. Sprott it defines elision as the "process by which two syllables are reduced to the prosodical value of one". Finally it describes elision as capable of giving "the appearance or illusion of smoothness",[21] that is, elision in English telescopes the normal pronunciation of the items, whereas in Arabic the items are pronounced normally, although the foot is a variation of the original.

** For a single example among poets, see Nizār Qabbāni in his free poems written in rajaz. His poem "Ma' Jarīdah",[22] for example has twenty feet with zihāf out of twenty-three; his poem "'Īdu Mīlādihā"[23] has fifty-eight out of eighty-eight; and his poem "Ilā Sādhajah"[24] has fifty-one out of seventy-seven. Qabbāni, in much of his free verse, attempts to be as conversational as possible. In fact the conversational, familiar tone, the use of language nearer to the vernacular and to the contemporary idiom is one of Qabbāni's most important poetic attributes. When he employs rajaz in free verse, he feels the scope wide open for a greater achievement of this tendency, sometimes even arriving at an extremely prosaic expression as in his poem "Qissat Rachel Schwarzenberg".[25] But the use of zihāf does smooth down the rigidity of al-rajaz and the formality of the pronounced equilibrium and angularity of mus taf 'i lun. M. Nuwaihi and L. 'Awad,[26] regard the change of rhythm in some metres of free verse as having been effected under the influence of the English Iambic (Nuwaihi adds Trochaic) metres. It is certainly functional to assume that the constant readings in the poetry of a foreign language can effect our sense of rhythm, in general, and poets in all languages have transferred the rhythms of another poetry to their own. However, the specification that it was the influence of English metres on poets which has effected the changes in the rhythms of contemporary free verse is not correct. For whereas one can safely suggest that the rhythms of English poetry might have influenced some of our poets, it is necessary to remember two other major influences. Firstly the influence of the rhythms of French poetry which have influenced such poets as Adūnīs especially in his adoption of the prose poem. Nizār Qabbāni himself is not known to be acquainted with English poetry, only with French. Secondly, and this is most important, the influence of the rhythms and stresses of daily speech which have changed considerably since Classical times.[27]

its frequent use in rajaz is by no means confined to the moderns.*

Al-khabab** is another metre which has been greatly revived and elevated from its former light and noisy quality,[31] and rather obscure role. The repetition of fā'ilun fa'lun and fa'ilun can produce a kind of hilarious music which has been exploited by the dancing sufis.[32] It has been discussed above how 'Ali Aḥmad Bākathīr employed this metre in his free verse play, greatly reducing its musical quality and rendering it

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* For example, al-Mutanabbi's urjūzah beginning with the verse:

28 وشامخ من الجبال اقود فرد كيأ فوخ البعير الاصيد

has forty feet with zihāf out of seventy-two.

** Most writers use al-khabab to denote both metres made from the repetition of the foot fā'ilun, and metres made from the repetition of the feet fa'lun and fa'ilun. If a poem is written in the first with few or no elisions of fā'ilun to fa'lun or fa'ilun, it will certainly have a distinctly different rhythm; the following verses by A. Ḥijāzi illustrate this:

29 حبنا .. قاد خطوى الى ملكه المزدهر
في طريق تسقفه اسلع مع غصون الشجر
وهو خلف الغصون وخلف الشجر

This is a slower rhythm which can be quite august at times. However, this metre retains the potential to give a staccato rhythm just like fa'lun and fa'ilun, like this verse by Ḥijāzi from the same poem:

خجل ،خائف ،رائع ، مهتدى

A perusal of the more famous national anthems in Arabic in modern times shows that many of them are either in khabab or in rajaz. In these, the staccato potential of both metres (al-khabab including that formed by fā'ilun) is exploited:

كلنا للوطن للعلا للعلم
ملء عين لزمن سيفنا والقلم

Ismā'īl, however, seems to differentiate between the two for he lists them as two different feet.[30] He is partly right in this differentiation, but one must take into account that the shorter feet are really the elided feet of the longer one, fā'ilun, and that they interchange frequently. One must also take into account the staccato potentials of both feet which, if exploited, gives them very similar rhythms.

quasi conversational, a good achievement marred by the poet's limited poetic ability. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah used it in 1947 in her elegiac poem "Al-Kūlīrā", and was able to manipulate its rhythms aptly enough to suit the sombre theme.[34] Later on, poets began to introduce a great deal of zihāf into this metre.

It is interesting to see N. al-Malā'ikah accept the thesis that metres can develop with time, when she discovered that she herself had been using in al-khabab an elided foot which had not been used in Classical poetry. This is fā'ilu, which she finds quite congenial to the ear.[35] However, she is not the only poet who uses it, for most poets resort to it unconsciously in free verse:

fa'lun fa'lun fa'lun fa'lun اعطاها الباب المرصـــــود [36]

نفسا ذرّ بهـا حسّا فتكاد تفيـــــق

fa'ilun fā'ilu fa'lun fā'ilu fā'ilu fa'l.

The change in these rhythms which one finds among most poets who write in this metre is a sure proof of the changing rhythms in the subconscious of the poets. These rhythms are influenced by the various rhythms of daily speech, of Classical poetry, of folklore poetry and songs, of the modern musical culture of the Arab poet which in itself is varied and highly mixed, and above all of the change in the psychology of the modern poet himself, i.e. of the rhythmic quality of modern man's total experience.[37] The tone of the poem, which is closely connected not only with the immediate psychological state of the poet, but also with the more lasting psychological attitudes that have taken hold of the whole generation, seems to influence the poet's use of zihāf.*

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* The present writer has had an experience in this particular element which might help further to illustrate the above point. Falling under the spell of this metre, she wrote two short poems. The first which deals with a tragic topic and expresses a general state of despair and death resorts to a great number of zihāf where fā'ilu dominates whole lines:

(Continued on next page)

But fā'ilu is not the only new introduction to this metre. Poets found themselves slipping into the use of other feet which are basically not of the khabab type. Adūnīs hardly writes a poem in this metre without using fa'ūlun or fā'ilātun etc.:

38 اصرخ بعد السكوت الذى لا يغامر فيه الكلامُ

fā'ilu fa'lun fa'ūlun fa'ūlun fa'ūlu fa'ūlun fa'ūlun.

and this in the same poem:

fā'ilun fā'ilātun. كي يصيـــر الصباحُ

and this: 39 اخلق ارضاً تثور معي وتخـــونُ

fā'ilu fa'lun fa'ūlu fa'ūlu fa'ūlun.

This is no mere carelessness on the part of the poet, who is himself a prominent experimentalist. It may be due to the fact that a new metre is evolving from the combination of the khabab feet and fa'ūlun, helped towards this, probably, by the introduction of fā'ilu. Of course it is possible to read the scansion differently according to the following:

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* Continued from previous page.

المهزلة الكبرى أن الميت يدفن ،يعلن عنه ،يساق ،يراه الشارع محمولا ، ويغيّب في حفـــــرة .

---- /∪∪– /∪∪– /–– /∪∪– /–– /∪∪– /∪∪– /∪∪– /∪∪– /∪∪–/–– /–– /–∪∪ / ––

where eight out of fifteen feet are fā'ilu. The other poem is different. It is ironical, and rather resentful, with an underlying tone of threat, i.e. it is a poem that expresses a self-assured state of mind. Only one line resorts to this kind of zihāf; but probably in order to lessen the angular tone of al-khabab there was the subconscious use of words with the aspirate h and the semi-vowels w و and y ى :

ستكـون حبيبي ليتـك تعلم اى هوى اهـــواكُ

o–– /–∪∪ /–∪∪ / –– /–∪∪ /–∪∪

العتمة غمر وهـــواك خلال غنّى في الليـــــلُ

o–– /–– /–– /∪∪– /∪∪– /–∪∪ / ––

قبّلت النصل ،حلمت بانك سيد هذا الويـــــلُ

o–– /–∪∪ /–∪∪ /–∪∪ /–∪∪ /–– /––

These poems are not yet published.

mufta'ilun fā'ilātun fa'ūlun fa'ūlu fa'ūlun fa'ūlun, which makes the first part in majzū' al-mujtath and the second al-mutaqārab; but then other lines in the poem would not fit this scheme such as the line:

يا بقايا بلا قامة يا بقايا تمـــوت

fā'ilun fā'ilun fā'ilun fā'ilun fā'ilān, which is pure khabab. At any rate, experimental poetry is becoming increasingly adventurous in the use of metrical variations and in the gradual, smooth gliding from one metre to another. This will be further discussed in the section on compound metres. Al-Nuwaihi, discussing al-khabab, speaks of a tendency among modern poets to write this metre (and other metres especially rajaz)[40] in accentual rather than quantitative measures. These, he says, are found in the spoken language. But he does not really prove this. He contends that fā'ilu is not formed by the ordinary kind of zihāf, for it is customary either to change two short syllables into one long syllable (fā'ilun becoming fa'lun, to give just one example), or resolve one long syllable into a short one (fā becoming fa). There is no explanation, he insists, for the last two short syllables in fā'ilu.[41] However, Nuwaihi takes it for granted that fā'ilu is formed from fa'lun, overlooking the fact that it begins with the long syllable of fā'ilun, the original foot. The first of the two short syllables at the end of fā'ilu if one accepts that this foot is derived from fā'ilun, is the original 'i, the second syllable lu is the elided syllable lun in fā'ilun.

The idea of accentual measures in modern Arabic poetry is interesting but needs to be studied more closely not only theoretically but also experimentally in the phonetics laboratory. On the other hand, Nuwaihi's theory, although it seems at first glance to be alien to what is customarily understood to be the Arabic prosodical measures, ought not to be rejected, but should be regarded as a tentative attempt on the part of this able critic to explain the new poetic rhythms. One feels sure

that Nuwaihi himself does not feel completely satisfied with his own explanations and will surely follow them up with intensive and extensive experimentation and study. Nuwaihi does not seem to have discovered the experiments of Adūnīs and others in this metre, for he does not refer to them. However, it is these yet unexplored experiments that could have furnished al-Nuwaihi with the material most apt to illustrate his theory. This is not to say that this poetry is really accentual, but that there is a margin for discussion and critical experimentation there.

In a general study of this sort, one feels at a loss for not being able to give a decisive answer to this question, but such an answer would require an exhaustive study of minute matters in prosody and the aid of special phonetic techniques, as well as an investigation of the function of metre in different kinds of poetry, which are beyond the scope of this work. However, it is relevant to mention that the written language in Arabic has a well-defined quantitative quality. How much accentual quality it has it is not possible to say without technical aid, but one can feel safe in saying that whatever its accentual quality, it does not compare with that of English, which is heavily accentual.[42] The quantitative quality in formal Arabic verse will persist so long as all letters remain vocalised. There are special rules to the reading of short vowels, and Arabs are very careful, when reading, to pronounce short vowels as short, while having greater freedom in the pronunciation of long vowels, as has been shown in the discussion of Mandūr's idea of accent.[43] But we cannot go into this highly specialised subject here.*

* The written language is quite different from the vernacular. The latter seems to have greater elasticity and to be distinctly accentual, although it still does not seem to compare in this with the English language. The different Arabic dialects probably offer a great variety of accentual measures and scope for an interesting study; for some dialects, say the Egyptian, seem to use more short vowels than other dialects, say the Lebanese.

Compound metres in Arabic, al-buḥūr al-murakkabah, are of two kinds. There are those made up of three feet to a hemistich, and those made up of four feet. The first, apparently, have an unequal combination of feet which is two to one. But they differ in their arrangement of these feet, some placing the odd foot in the middle aba, and others placing it at the end aab. The second category is made up of two units of combinations (ab ab) to a hemistich.

In the aab kind there are two metres in Arabic, so far. These are al-sarī' mustaf'ilun mustaf'ilun fā'ilun and al-wāfir mufā'alatun mufā'alatun fa'ūlun. The consecutive repetition of the first foot suggests a scope for free verse where a poet can repeat the first foot more than twice. The darb should also be repeated frequently at the ends of lines to keep the rhythm of the metre. Al-Malā'ikah insists that this darb should be repeated at the end of every line[44] but this is not necessary, and poets have not kept to this rule.[45]

Of these two metres, al-sarī' and al-wāfir, the first has been very popular and was experimented with quite early in the fifties, some of the best contemporary poetry being written in it. The darb of al-sarī' has an interesting variety of forms ranging through fā'ilun, fa'lun, fa'ilun, fā'ilān and maf'ūlān.[46] The last one is most interesting because it gives a distinctive rhythm to the poem. There seems to be no technical reason why several of these forms of the darb should not be used in the same free poem, a technique which might help to dispel any monotony resulting from a faithful repetition of the same musical motif, as well as enhance the expression of a variety of tones and effects. In the two hemistich form the unity of the darb in the poem was necessary because of the symmetry and identical quality of the verses. But these have been abandoned in free verse. In fact it is this liberty to abandon both symmetry and the identical reproduction of the verse units

that is one of the first attributes of 'freedom' in free verse.[47] Al-sarī', although based mainly on the rajaz foot mustaf'ilun, is really distinct from it and has quite a different rhythm.[48]

In the aba kind, the metre that has been consciously experimented with so far is al-khafīf metre: fā'ilātun mustaf'ilun fā'ilātun. The elasticity and richness of this metre have been partly discussed above.[49] Its capacity to yield to a free repetition of either foot as well as to the introduction of feet legitimately derived from them makes it a fit target for avant-garde poets aiming at the achievement of greater freedom. Basically it is a very melodious metre, as used in Classical poetry. But despite this quality which gives it a harmonious musical composition, its distinct features have been noted and experimented with even in Classical times:* mustaf'ilun fā'ilātun (mujtath dimetre), fā'ilātun fā'ilātun (ramal dimetre), fā'ilātun mustaf'ilun (khafīf d metre).

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* The experiment of Abū 'l-Ḥasan 'Ali ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ansāri, the Sicilian poet who lived in the second half of the eleventh century A.D. is interesting in this context. He is the author of the "poem of five metres" published a century ago by M. Amari in his Biblioteca Arabo-Siculo. S.M. Stern studied this six-verse poem which Amari regarded to be strophic and found it to be basically a poem of the classical type.[50] Amari's arrangement of the poem was in the following manner (only the first verse is given):

وغـــــزال مشنـــــف قدرثـى لي بعد بعـــدى
لمـــا رأى ما لقيـــت

Stern, however, re-arranged it in the usual two hemistich form producing a poem in the khafīf metre, with several arrangements of internal rhymes:

1. وغزال مشنف قدرثي لـــــــي بعد بعدى لما رأى ما لقيـت

Of course, put in this arrangement the poem is in pure khafīf, and not strophic at all; but its internal divisions marked by strict rhyme endings do give birth, if arranged differently, to a structure of three two foot strophes to a verse, each strophe with a different metrical scheme. The six verses are divided identically (or nearly so, for the poet omits the rhyme at the end of the first strophe of the third verse[51]) so that we have three series of parallel strophes of identical metrical pattern, length and usually rhyme throughout the poem.
The other four arrangements of this poem of "five metres" he suggests to be:

2. وغـــزال مشنـــــــــف قدرثي لي بعـد بعـــــدى

(Continued on next page)

Al-Khafīf has been partly utilized by al-Sayyāb in a single poem "Jaykūr Ummi".[52] Using al-khafīf in his first line as a basis, he resolves the following lines into ramal and rajaz each of which is based on one foot of al-khafīf, alternating irregularly between them in the first part of the poem and bringing al-khafīf back at intervals. In the latter part of the poem, however, he forgets completely about the rajaz and simply alternates between al-khafīf and al-ramal.[53] The first lines

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* foot note continued from previous page.

which he regards as an irregular dimetre of the khafīf. Both the khafīf basis as well as the irregularity are certain, for it scans fā'ilātun mufa'ilun, fā'ilātun fā'ilātun. The repetition of fā'ilātun is an interesting event in metre suggesting the freedom a poet can have in writing in al-khafīf. In the above arrangement the last two feet of the complete verse are omitted.
Of course one can regard this second version as a combination of two metres, the khafīf dimetre for the first strophe, and the ramal dimetre for the second.
3. The third arrangement by Stern is in the regular dimetre of al-khafīf

وغـــــزال مشنّـــــف مثل روض مفـــــوّف

in which only the first strophes of the six verses are employed.
4. In the fourth arrangement Stern gets the following result:

قد رثى لي بعد بعـــدى لما رأى ما لقيـــــــــت

This he regards to be in irregular ramal, an incorrect assumption, for al-ramal cannot admit mustaf'ilun. This must be regarded either as an irregular khafīf in which the repetition of fā'ilātun takes place after the first foot (instead of the last as in No.2), thus: fā'ilātun fā'ilātun, mustaf'ilun fā'ilātun; or else it may be regarded as a mixed metre in which the first strophe is in ramal and the second in mujtath.
5. His arrangement of the fifth, about which he seems hesitant, is as follows:

لما رأى ما لقيـــت في حبه اذ ضنيـــــت

using only the last strophes in the six verses. This he rightly says to be in al-mujtath. One may have the following arrangement as a fifth attempt:

وغزال مشنف قد رثى لي بعد بعدى لما رأى ما لقيـــت
مثل روض مفوّف لا ابالي وهو عنـدي في حبّه اذ ضنيـت

which gives a more coherent meaning to the verses, but Stern's suggestion remains interesting to us from a prosodical point of view, because it shows the emergence of al-mujtath from al-khafīf. In fact, all these arrangements show the extreme flexibility and richness of this metre and point to the great scope it has for the achievement of a colourful variation of rhythm.
Of course, other arrangements could be made, but the above examples are enough for the purpose of this discussion.

of the poem show his conscious use of the three metres:

khafīf تلك امي وان اجئهـــا كسيحـــا

ramal لاشا ازهارها والماء فيها والترابـــا

rajaz ونافضا ،بمقلتي ،اعشاشها والغابـــا

In fact, his neglect of al-rajaz in the latter and major part of the poem shows that al-khafīf yields more naturally to a free repetition of the ramal foot than to that of the rajaz foot. However, this experiment by al-Sayyāb whose ear for metrical measures was one of the most accurate in contemporary Arabic poetry with a strong Classical basis, can only be regarded as a tentative experiment which he had no time to bring to maturity before his premature death.

Another experiment attempted in al-khafīf metre was a poem written in 1960.[54] It keeps to this metre, repeating only fā'ilātun, the ramal foot which is sometimes resolved into fa'ūlun:

عبر الغمير نهرنا واغتربنـــا

fa'ilātun mafā'ilun fā'ilātun

رحت في قارب يراوده موج مداج وليد

fā'ilātun mafā'ilun fa'ilātun fā'ilātun fa'ūlun

Muḥammad Muṣṭafa Badawi experimented more freely with this metre, and came out with some interesting results. In fact, Badawi's experiment which is a conscious attempt to utilize the compound metres in Arabic, shows a pioneering spirit and a confidence unmatched by the other milder and more timid attempts of the time (his poems were written between 1953-1954). In the introduction to his diwan, Badawi declares his rejection of metres formed by the repetition of the same foot (al-buḥur al-mufradah) for they are, in his opinion, monotonous ("that dangerous monotony which lulls the senses - and how far is the pure, vigilant poetic vision from that"!)[55] He also rejects poems written in many metres, for "this disturbs the reader who has a sensitive musical ear..."[56] as well as prose poetry (al-shi'r al-manthūr) which he declares not to be poetry at all. His reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, because poetry is "a verbal

expression of a psychological experience which has its own basic emotional elements", and secondly, and this he regards as of primary importance, because this expression cannot be "based on chaos but follows a definite musical style".[57] The music of poetry, he insists, differs from that of prose in that it follows a complete and unified order, and it is this order which enables the poet to gain control over his emotional experience instead of spending himself in sighs and interrupted shrieks ~~which have no relevance to~~ real life. The artist's control over his own emotional experience is nothing but his control of life itself. "Al-Shi'r al-Manthūr", therefore, is not poetry because it lacks the element of form without which art is not art at all.[58] This idea of his challenges the ideas of apologists for prose poetry, as will be shown shortly.

Finally Badawi rejects rhyme, which he finds to be a shackle to creativity.[59] He did manage to write his poetry without resorting to the use of rhyme. His general technique was therefore one which had to exclude several possibilities of expression: rhymed poetry, mixed metres in the same poem, metres based on the repetition of one foot and prose poetry. He attempted to build the poem on one of the known Arabic metres which are nearest to the rhythm of speech. He makes the metre the basis of the poem without adhering to it fanatically, sometimes contenting himself by fitting only a part of a line of poetry according to it, leaving the rest, even the beginning of the line, sometimes, free.[60]

Al-khafīf was one of the metres he exploited greatly:

fā'ilātun mafā'ilun fa'ilātān	الزمـان الذى يهيم على الارض [61]
fā'ilātun mafā'ilun maf'ūlun	توأم الكون ، صورة الصيرورة
mustaf'ilun fa'ilun fa'lān	القى بمسوله المذهـول
fā'ilātun fā'ilātun	حينما شلّـت يـداه
mafā'ilun fā'ilātun	ولم تمسا حياتـــه
fa'ilātun mafā'ilun fa'lān	فاخوه الذى بنى الاهرام
fā'ilātun mafā'ilān	منذ عصر يعمي الخيـال

fā'ilātun mafā'ilun fa'lān — والسواقي تدور والشادوف

fa'ilātun mustaf'ilān — ويئن الناي الكئيب

fā'ilātun mustaf'ilun fā'ilātun fā'ilātun fa'lān

في الحقول الظمأى التي تمتطيها الشمس ـ كابوس الظهـــر ـ

mafā'ilun fa'lun — تكـاد تخنقهـــا .

The third verse is already highly irregular, beginning with mustaf'ilun, so is the fifth and the last. The darb forms are also highly varied and irregular, too, and the music, although ruling the poem, eludes a distinct description. It is highly unfamiliar, of course, but one can see how the meaning and images of the poem stand out distinct and effective in their own right. In the tenth verse above the easy use of enjambment in al-khafīf is demonstrated. The absence of rhyme checks the overflow of music and the resonance of rhymed endings.

Other poems follow a more regular khafīf, but even in these Badawi succeeds in overcoming the great musical fluency of al-khafīf and rendering a poem which approximates the familiar tone of daily speech, with all its variations of rhythm and nuances but without falling into banality and unconvincing over-simplicity.[62] In his beautiful poem "Al-Tilāl",[63] the variations of tone and the rich nuances of a rather complex experience expressed in a contemporaneous language completely liberated from rhetoricism and traditional overtones, are achieved. Treating a subject of gravity and of a rather philosophical nature, the subjugation of loud music in poetry becomes an achievement. It should not follow, however, that all poetry must try to subdue as much of its music as Badawi has done with his, for some themes and moods would require a merrier, or at least a more distinctively perceptible music. Badawi's choice of theme and his general mood demand this kind of subdued musical technique, but he succeeds in keeping the fluency, and the rhythmical cohesion of the whole structure. Others would not be able to do this

with equal success. But one must remember that in this age, in which there is so much weight on the conscience of the Arab poet on the one hand, and in which the pronounced music of Arabic metres still carries with it much of the traditional idioms and moods on the other, no Arab poet can afford to write his poetry without resorting to techniques which will help him to change the music of this poetry. The change need not always be one of subjugation of the musical element, but can be a change in the nature and rhythms of this music. In a varied experience even rhetoricism, which is usually felt to be a defect in modern poetry, can have a place, if introduced in the right context, and for the right purpose. But it is probable that every modern poet will sometimes find himself looking for a technique which will help him to achieve less musicality in a poem without losing the special rhythms of poetic composition. Badawi's poetry offers him a very good example. One cannot help feeling amazed at the fact that neither Nuwaihi who is sincerely pre-occupied in studying poetic techniques which enable the poet to approximate contemporary speech, nor I. Ismā'īl mention Badawi's experiment. But then there are many other poetic experiments that have not been touched by them either, despite the fact that they were writing on a specialised topic and trying to probe into the possibilities of a new style of writing.

One can say that the khafīf metre has been effectively and genuinely liberated in Rasā'il Min London. Poems in this metre are the great majority in the diwan. He attempted a poem, "Al-Ma'badu 'l-Mutadā'ī", in al-tawīl,[64] (fa'ūlun mafā'īlun repeated four times in the verse), which shows the great struggle between, on the one hand, the high musicality of this metre, its tendency to group itself into units of two feet each: fa'ūlun mafā'īlun, and its traditional rigidity, and, on the other hand, the new purpose of the modern poet to achieve freedom and simplicity. In the greater part of the poem the pronounced tawīl rhythm happily

settles in the background, although it may reappear in full force in such verses as

رياح الشمال الهوج راح يسوقها اله غضوب

In other verses there is a less pronounced coupling of feet:

fa'ūlun mafā'īlun fa'ūlu fa'ūlun

ولكن امام المذبح المتهدم

fa'ūlu mafā'īlun fa'ūl

يرتل كهان الاله

fa'ūlun mafā'īlun fa'ūlun fa'ūlun

كما رتلوا منذ القرون المواضي

The tendency to repeat fa'ūlun twice is one of the means of liberation in this metre, which, like al-basīṭ (mustaf'ilun fā'ilun repeated four times in a verse) tends to divide itself into units of two feet each. Al-Sayyāb also tried to free al-ṭawīl but could not overcome its inherited rigidity.[65] He also attempted the liberation of al-basīṭ but again with very little success. Only rarely does he produce a verse which does not have either one, two, three or four couples, as when he says:

mafā'īlun fā'ilun fa'lun.

ابـــل منها صدى روحـــي [66]

Free verse, general features:

One of the main features of free verse is the use of enjambment or run on lines, "tadwīr" or "jarayān". The main reason given for this is the fact that a poet wants to stop only when the meaning is finished.[67] Although this is valid, the caesura at the end of the line need not necessarily stop the meaning. A normal stanza usually contains a unit of meaning but does employ caesura between verses. On the other hand, a poet might resort to enjambment under the influence of music, for one of the chief characteristics of music is continuity. This point needs much more research than this work can allow, but it does seem from the study of poetry on the whole that some poets are more influenced in their rhythmical arrangements by the art of music and its own directions which do not always correspond to traditional poetic rhythmical habits.[68] For example, "rhythm and rhyme that tend to make the single line a unit",[69] as N. Frye puts it, are a poetic and not a musical attribute. It does not follow, of course, that poetry which does not reflect the chief

characteristics of music is not musical, for it can be even more mellifluous than the other. We are here discussing certain characteristics only.

A poet might resort to enjambment also when the word with which he ends a line has a superfluous syllable which belongs, from a metrical aspect, to the next line. This usually spoils the correct vocalisation of the rhyme, but modern poets have accepted it because rhyme has lost much of its old established value with them:

70 فيرجـــــع الصـــدى
كأنه النشيجْ
يا خليجْ

Poets can sometimes resort to enjambment as a technical device because the particular meaning needs a sustained (even breathless) continuity of rhythm:

71 من يسنـــد الطاوين في احلام يقظتهـــم،
الفازلين من المحال روءى عجيبة :
سررا من الاكسير مختوما بذوب المســكِ
اعنابـــا ، ظلالا مورقـــات ؟

The enumeration of all the blissful objects of Paradise "those wonderful visions" here takes on a neurotic urgency meant to convey some ironical undertones. The objects enumerated have an identical emphasis and value and are uttered in one breath.

'Iziddīn Ismā'īl is right, however, in expressing fear that such a technique might result in writing long sentences, stretching over many lines, which could exhaust the reader.[72] Whereas a breathless sentence can be of aesthetic value if used sparingly for specific purposes, its frequent use can be a serious blemish. Khalīl Ḥāwi, in his three diwans, Nahr al-Ramād, (Beirut, 1957), Al-Nāy wa 'l-Rīḥ, (Beirut, 1961) and Bayādir al-Jū', (Beirut, 1965), has been criticised by Ismā'īl for

resorting to very frequent enjambment ,[73] some of his sentences stretching in one breath over several lines, even to a length of ten feet:

mutafā	كـذب 74
ʻilun mustafʻilun mutafāʻilun mu	دمي ينحرّ ،يشتمني ،يئنّ
tafāʻilun mustafʻilun muta	الى متى ازني ، وابصقُ
fāʻilun mutafā	جبهتي ، رئتي
ʻilun mutafāʻilun mustaf	على لقب وكرسيّ
ʻilun mutafāʻilān	اضاجـع مومياء .

But the reason for this is that his poetic utterance comes out in long emotional and sematic units. This is his particular style and, even if there is no enjambment , the same hurling down of words takes place. The following is a good example:

fāʻilātun faʻilātun fāʻilātun	نحن في عتمة قبو محكمٌ 75
fāʻilātun fāʻilātun faʻilātun	نمسح الحمى ،ونصحو ، ونغنّي
faʻilātun	نتخفّى
faʻilātun fāʻilātun fāʻilān	ونخفّي العمر من درب السنينْ

This makes his poetry convey the impression that it is in constant crisis, and does give his general style a monotony of tone and rhythm. ʻIzidd**ī**n Ismāʻīl criticises this as a weakness in Hāwi's verse.[75a] However, this is an idiosyncracy of the poet's style with which he gets away at times when his vision attains, as in some poems, an aesthetic level of importance. When it does not, the rhythm becomes heavily monotonous.

Nāzik al-Malāʼikah completely rejects al-tadwīr in free verse, saying that it is applicable only in two hemistich verses, between the first and second shatrs.[76] This rule which she lays down is immediately defeated by the numerous examples of tadwīr in good poems written in free verse. Al-tadwīr is another secret of freedom in this verse form and can be greatly utilised not only in lyrical but also in dramatic verse, where long sentences and a continuity of utterance and rhythm are required.

Another objection which al-Malā'ikah directs to free verse is the use by poets of five and nine feet in a line. She does not mention seven feet. Her reason for this rejection is that the two numbers have an ugly effect on the ear, a reason which prevented the Arabs from employing them in their poetry.[77] She overlooked here, however, the fact that Classical poetry was in a two hemistich form which cannot admit odd numbers, and that the employment of five or nine feet in a hemistich would produce a verse of ten or eighteen feet which, because it would be sustained in this length throughout the whole poem, would be excessively heavy.

In fact the use of five, seven and nine feet in a line of poetry is another secret of 'freedom' in free verse and lends it its new rhythms. Nāzik herself resorts to the use of five feet in her own poetry.[78] This epoch is trying to create its own verse rhythms and this fact gives an incentive to poets to experiment and should give the same incentive to critics to probe into the possibilities of metrical freedom in the new poetry before any rhythmic phenomenon is rejected. The fact that the old Arabs did not utilise a certain possibility, whether prosodical or otherwise, is no criterion of worth.

Rhyme in Free Verse:

Rhyme was an obligatory element in Classical poetry, and the best poems were written in monorhyme. Under the influence of Western poetry and the revived tradition of the Andalusian muwashshah, modern Arab poets tried to break through the entrenched tradition of the monorhyme and succeeded in introducing greater variety to the rhyme-scheme of the modern poem. Blank verse, however, although attempted seriously in the first decade by al-Zahāwi, then by Shukri in the second and, in the twenties, by Abū Shādi and others, failed drastically for technical reasons which have already been discussed.[79] When free verse became the vogue in the fifties lending itself to more drastic experimentation, it was discovered

that blank verse could now be more easily introduced, contrary to the contention of Nāzik al-Malā'ikah which was discussed above. Other writers on the subject such as al-Nuwaihi, find that the liberation of the poet from rhyme is another achievement of free verse, for, contrary to al-Malā'ikah's preference for a rhyme which rings itself with decisive resonance at the end of the line,[80] poets may no longer want this musical element. He insists, rightly, that there are other means of rhythmic variety in a free poem which do not depend on the rhyme at all.[81] However, the majority of modern poets have not really abandoned the rhyme, but show a pervasive attachment to it. They use rhyme in a variety of ways, the most common of which use is the intervariation of several rhymes in the poem, not following a regular order. Some poets sometimes stick to a monorhyme.[82] Others, although using various rhymes in a poem, do not insist on it at the end of every line, and some get rid of it altogether.[83] Many times poets use fettered rhymes which do away with much pedantism and bring poetry nearer to a conversational tone.

The attachment which most poets show to rhyme endings might be the result of the continuity of a well entrenched tradition. Rhyme, of course, has its great qualities. It has a binding force, linking together units of meaning in a poem; it is the main structural factor in certain poetic forms such as the couplet, the quartet, the mukhammas, and other stanzaic forms in which the verse lengths are identical. In others which vary the length of their verses rhyme still plays an important structural as well as ornamental role, giving scope for the achievement of numerous irregular stanzaic forms. It lends to the poem, no matter in what form it is written, a special musical element different from that given by other factors, an element which sharpens the accent and which the poet must feel free to exploit if he so chooses. It has, if employed aptly, an emotional and even a spiritual effect and can sometimes have

great poignancy, especially if used suddenly after rhymeless verses. It also enhances the meaning, for in a good poem the rhyme can be the culmination of what the poet wants to say. In fact, a bad or meaningless rhyme can be fatal to a verse, even to a whole poem. Although a good poem must not have superfluous or badly situated words, the presence of such a word in the middle of the poem might pass unnoticed if other factors are rich, but it can never be overlooked if it is a rhyme.[34]

On the other hand, there should be no taboo on blank verse al-shi'r al-mursal, which in Arabic may have its own advantages in modern times. This is different from blank verse in English which depends on the iambic pentametre and which seems to have gone out of fashion now. Blank verse in Arabic can be in any metre and can employ any number of feet in a verse, that is it is rhymeless free verse. Some themes need little apparent music and shi'r mursal will be found very serviceable, especially in dramatic poetry, if applied to free verse and if it takes account of other techniques available: the use of zihāf to decrease the loudness of the musical (and lyrical) quality, the use of tadwīr to approximate dramatic prose passages (thus having the advantage of the special rhythm of poetry and the special prose techniques), the simplified language, and the capacity to incorporate the contemporary idiom of daily life into poetry.

One can sum up the structural achievements of free verse in the following points: firstly, the variation in the length of verses, using, not only the traditional number of feet but also odd numbers hitherto not used in poetry, a prerogative which gives free verse some of its particular rhythms. Secondly, the capacity to lengthen a line of poetry to a length never before attained in the Classical poetry; for although there is a limit to the length of any rhythmic unit, the scope for freedom remains very high in free verse and occasionally very long lines are written if the meaning and the emotional need of the passage merit it. However,

this prerogative should be used very sparingly. Thirdly, the use of tadwīr which, if used aptly and for an artistic purpose, can lend great variety and freedom to free verse. Fourthly, the variation of several darb forms in the same poem which can give great variety to the rhythm. Fifthly, the arbitrary introduction of caesura even in the middle of verses so that the poet can vary his pauses and the flow of his utterance according to his intent. Sixthly, the arbitrary use of rhyme, and the freedom to vary the rhyme-scheme. Seventhly, and this is an attribute that exploits all others, the freedom the free verse poet has in creating his own verse structure depending greatly on the content. The connection between form and content is closely tied up so that the form of the poem takes shape not from a pre-conceived pattern but from the evolution of the content itself. Since a poem in the modern concept, more often than not, grows organically, heightening in tone and emotion as it progresses, and developing from the point of thought and initial emotional attitude to a point of crisis and emotional fulfilment, free verse seems most fit for it. Every new poem is an adventure guided primarily by the poet's aesthetic intuition, his feel of rhythm and his sense of completion. Although this form seems easy enough even for amateurs, a really good free verse poem is more difficult to achieve than a poem of the two hemistich form. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah was right in regarding freedom in this form as a trap for weak poets.[85] She was also right in perceiving in the easy flow of this form a dangerous element which can lure a poet into composing a bad structure.[86] Moreover, this form gives greater scope for prosaic expressions than the two hemistich form which is tied to a traditional poetic idiom and to a symmetrical construction that does not readily admit the incorporation into poetry of the conversational which in turn leads the careless poet, as Nuwaihi rightly asserts,[87] to slip into prosaic banalities.

These are some of the characteristic possibilities of the free verse form. There is great scope for poets to explore the realms of the various kinds of rhythms which a good poem can have. The fact that poetic rhythm is by no means solely metrical has been touched upon several times in this work, for if metrical rhythm is but one kind of rhythm, then that resulting from the flow of the emotion in a poem is another (whether this flow is in waves[88] or grows in intensity to a climax). A third kind of rhythm is accentual resulting from the stress which takes place in Arabic especially on vowels and on certain consonants particularly on letters such as the nasals n and m, the liquid l, and the semi-vowels w و and y ي . In Arabic stress does not seem to be connected with fixed stressed syllables, but is more arbitrary, as has been demonstrated in the chapter on Mandūr. All these problems furnish a rich field for specialised study which could produce gratifying results. In this work, only a mere beginning can be attempted, bringing forth the suggestions that arise in the mind, with a hope that detailed research will be undertaken in the future. The relatively arbitrary nature of stress in Arabic, it may be found, gives greater variety to rhythmic modulations. A fourth kind of rhythm is what Frye calls the "semantic" rhythm,[89] which follows the sense of the poem and which is particularly found in prose. A fifth kind of rhythm is one emerging from either the harmony or the repellent nature of the textures of words and their sound-pattern. Frye particularises assonance here, but this is by no means limited to assonance, for consonance* and even

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* C.W. Cooper & J. Holmes say on this:

> "Certain consonant sounds - such as the sibilant s, for instance, the lingering liquid l, the plosive p, the murmuring m, the guttural g, and combinations of these - are said to have certain rather special effects upon the reader."[90]

In Arabic, of course, p is not found, neither is the guttural g used except in certain countries. Other gutturals and sounds not known in English can have a great effect, such as the guttural غ gh which can be very musical and effective in certain contexts, and the emphatic sibilant ṣ, ص , etc.[91]

desonance are very effective. A poet might use desonance to convey or enhance a particular disharmony, bewilderment, doubt, rejection, discord, etc. All these techniques based on alliteration and the exploitation of the qualities and relationships of vowels and consonants result in an oracular kind of rhythm which can be highly effective. These and other techniques (such as the use of pause in the middle of verses or at the end, enjambment , long or short lines, etc.) can be exploited in a sixth kind of rhythm called the nimetic rhythm[92] which attempts to catch the mode of speech, the psychological state which the poet is trying to convey. Al-Sayyāb, in his later poetry demonstrates a great power of conveying the rhythm of the life of a sick man in search of cure, or lying in a hospital bed awaiting death: the reminiscences, the regrets (some of which are heart rending), the sudden twitches of hope, the desperate longing for his children, the hopeless longing for his wife and for the image of woman, with all the self-pity, the anger, the physical pains, the dead virility of a man who knows he is doomed. Al-Sayyāb's genius has been recognised by his contemporaries. One of the greatest attributes of this poet is his capacity of reproducing the rhythm of the particular experience he is delineating. Although Adūnīs knows the tenets of his craft as regards prosody, his poetry does not reflect a real variety of rhythms, as if life for him were one stretch of a sustained attitude. The great variety in the modulation of his metrical rhythm is not supported, as in the case of al-Sayyāb, by a great variety of the nimetic rhythm. Khalīl Ḥāwi shows little variety in either.

This chapter has attempted to discuss some of the characteristics of the free verse form in Arabic and to illustrate some of its attempts to advance its liberation. The tendency of the modern Arab poet is to emancipate rhythm and metre from "formal artifice" so that he will be free, in the words of Herbert Read, to "act creatively under laws of his own

imagination".[93] Perhaps Read's description of what happened to English poetry when free verse* became the normal practice of poets is also relevant to Arabic poetry. He says, "It was not always understood that, having cast off the tyranny of obsolete laws, the poet was under the necessity of originating his own, and much of the free verse* that has been practised since 1914 compromises the theory of its feebleness. Nevertheless, the theory is right..."

The contemporary theory of poetic form in Arabic must not be regarded as the theory of a particular school, but as an essential theory of growth and originality evolved from the needs of Arabic poetry in the particular period through which it is passing. The poetic form in Arabic has far greater potentialities than the poets and critics have yet been able to visualise. The coming decades will see greater adventures in form and the achievements so far can only be regarded as the beginning of the age of exploration. Avant-garde criticism can help to explain and compare what is happening, when it happens. But critics must realise that modern poets are veering away from the rigid rules of Arabic prosody towards greater originality. Perhaps it is relevant to quote here a passage written early in 1959 which discusses the problem:

> The knowledge of the science of prosody is one thing, and the criticism of contemporary poetry within its old boundaries is another; for we are constricted in view of the new events in metres to have the attitude of discoverers... It is absolutely impossible to put limitations on the kind of experiments which a poetic genius can make, now or in the future. As for imitators and adventurers who lack authenticity, /the answer is simple/: bad examples carry the seeds of death in their very hearts.
>
> The prosodical aspect of our poetry is subtle and elusive , appearing easy and simple to the fanatic critic, as he looks at it within the defined limits of al-Khalīl.

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* One is aware, of course, that the "free verse" Read is talking about is, unlike the Arabic "free verse", completely liberated from rhyme and metre. A further discussion on this will be given in the coming section on prose poetry.

However, it is far from being so. The critic of /modern Arabic/ prosody must regard the laws of al-Khalīl only as a basic point of approach, but must be at the same time aware of the danger of crystalizing the science of prosody within the old Khalilian limitations. Form and music in Arabic poetry will undoubtedly develop, and criticism will be forced to re-arrange its laws according to the creativity of poets and their successful experiments. No matter how creative criticism may be, it will always follow on the footsteps of fine art and will not decide its limits beforehand. 94

ii. Al-Shi'r al-Manthūr and Qasīdat al-Nathr

The thesis that poetry can only be written in verse and the clear-cut distinction between prose and poetry are more insisted upon by Arab than Western writers on prosody. O. Barfield, for example, finds the identification of the words poetry and poetical with metrical form "artificial";[95] the Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics finds it "naive".[96] T.S. Eliot, speaking of Anabasis (1922) by Saint John Perse, says,

> I refer to this poem as a poem. It would be convenient if poetry were always verse - either accented, alliterative, or quantitative; but that is not true. Poetry may occur within a definite limit on one side, at any point along a line of which the formal limits are 'verse' and 'prose'. ... The writer, by using, as does Mr. Perse, certain exclusively poetic methods, is sometimes able to write poetry in what is called prose...[97]

E. Wilson describes how, recently, "the techniques of prose and verse have been getting mixed up at a bewildering rate - with the prose technique steadily gaining."[98] He insists that "If, in writing about 'poetry' one limits himself to 'poets' who compose in verse, one excludes too much of modern literature, and with it too much of life."[99] He describes the processes that have been taking place in verse, how the "sharpness and the energy" even of Pound's technique of free verse have disappeared, and how the "beat gives way to a demoralized weariness". He talks of "metrics in full dissolution", of "verse turning to prose" in the hands of the poets.[100] It would be a very lengthy process to try to quote from the numerous Western writers, who reject the notion that poetry can only be written in verse.[101] On the other hand, many Arab writers, Classical and modern, contend that the form of poetry can only be metrical. The ideas of modern Arab writers will be discussed later on in this chapter. In Classical times there was no question of regarding poetic prose as poetry. The concept of poetry was not only fixed on the idea that poetry was

metrical, but also that al-shi'r, or al-qarīd, was that written in the form of the two hemistich qasīdah, as has been demonstrated above.[102] However, this sharp distinction might have been brought about by the implications in the Quran against poets, " والشعراء يتبعهم الغاوون. الم تر انهم في كل واد يهيمون ،وانهم يقولون ما لا يفعلون " and poetry, " وما علمناه الشعر ", (talking of the Prophet) when he was thought a poet by Quraish.[103] But this very implication shows that the distinction was not so sharp before that time, and that the Arabs did not find it abominable, from an artistic point of view, to describe the highly effective and imaginative prose of the Quran as poetry. As a result of this quasi sanctimonious distinction offered by the Quran, the poetic prose in this great book was tenaciously disconnected from poetry.

Another reason why Arabs insist that poetry must be metrical may be due to the fact that Arabic metres are so overwhelmingly rich and varied (the original sixteen metres give birth to about eighty variations) that poets and critics probably feel that to abandon them would mean a loss of immense riches and rhythmic variety. A third point may be linked with the realm of Sociology; the function of poetry in the social order, the perpetuation of poetic rhythm to serve the same purposes, the kind of civilisation poetry is serving at the time, etc. It seems that with the increasing mechanization and complication of Western civilisation, a tendency towards using prose structures for poetic expression has prevailed. Wilson asks the questions: "Is verse a more primitive technique than prose? Are its fixed rules like the syntax of languages, which are found to have been stiffer and more complicated the further back one goes?"[104] Macaulay in his book on Milton asserts that "as civilisation advances, poetry almost necessarily declines".[105] To him language is best fitted for the purpose of the poet in its rudest state. "Nations, like individuals, first perceive, and then abstract. They

advance from particular images to general terms. Hence the vocabulary of an enlightened society is philosophical, that of a half-civilised people is poetical."[106] Barfield in his book on Poetic Diction states that the tendency of poetry to develop from verse to prose is due to the progress of language.[107] For the "rise of prose... is a necessary event in the biography of a language" developing towards an increasing fixity of word order, a "factor which encourages the prose-form of all kinds of writing."[108] Among these writers, Macaulay seems quite adamant in his judgment. Barfield is aware of the presence of "plenty of contradictory evidence,"[109] and regards the element of music in poetry as capable of "counterbalanc/ing/ the tendency towards the prose form..."[110] Wilson, after presenting his questions mentioned above, does not answer them clearly and has, at the end of the chapter a revealing discovery to make, for he says in a postscript apparently written later, that Auden's Age of Anxiety (1947) "has nothing in common with prose". He says:

> The work of W.H. Auden has not shown a running to seed of the tendencies mentioned above /to resolve metrical forms/, but has on the contrary taken the direction of returning to the older tradition of serviceable and vigorous English verse.[111]

Eliot, with typical clarity of concepts, seems to know the answer. He is aware of the permanent value of the metrical structure, of the elements of change and recurrence in poetic forms,[112] of the importance of the poetic structure and its relation to musical technique,[113] and of the fact that the medium of prose is not always safe for poetry (for "much bad prose is poetic prose"[114]). What one concludes from his lecture on the "Music of Poetry" is that free verse is merely one form of poetic expression resorted to because "forms have to be broken and remade".[115] Free verse was "a revolt against dead form, and a

preparation for new form or for the renewal of the old", thus giving this prose medium a very temporary quality. The comment on the renewal of the old form stands in stark contrast to many writings on the subject which attribute a final perfection to one or another of the forms of prose used for poetic expression.* There is no degradation of metrical form but a suggestion that it has become temporarily stale.

According to Eliot, the change in the poetic form becomes necessary when a relationship with the colloquial speech of the day is to be made:

> 'Every revolution in poetry is apt to be, and sometimes to announce itself as, a return to common speech... The followers of a revolution develop the new poetic idiom in one direction or another; they polish or perfect it; meanwhile the spoken language goes on changing, and the poetic idiom goes out of date. [120]

But Eliot in this lecture does not explain why the modern poet, in trying to catch the "speech rhythms" and "sound patterns" of his day, had to resort to prose forms. Was it that the changes in the rhythms of modern life have tended to influence the poet towards the resolution of repetitive metrical rhythms for the more liberal and less apparent prose rhythms? One can hardly see a contradiction between the rhythms of a mechanized world which are both loud and highly repetitive and metrical rhythms,

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* A single example from Western writers is Charles Henri Ford, who says, "The prose poem is the form of the future."[116] Among contemporary Arab writers on the subject, the Lebanese, Unsi al-Ḥāj, who only writes in the medium of prose, says in his introduction to his volume Lann, describing the prose poem (qaṣīdat al-nathr):

117 "انها ارحب ما توصّل اليه توق الشاعر الحديث على صعيد التكنيك وعلى صعيد الفحوى في آن واحد ... انها الاطار او الخطوط العامة للاعمق والاساسي ..."

and Adūnīs, also writing in 1960, raises the prose poem above verse in his constant comparison between the two forms. To him, qaṣīdat al-nathr is "تمرد اعلى في نطاق الشكل الشعري" [118] and "قفزة خارج العواجز كلها" [119]

unless modern poets resort to the more liberal prose rhythms as an escape from the incessant, unrelenting, mechanical rhythms which dominate their lives. But this experience is not necessarily valid for every poet. However, the change in the spiritual experience and emotional attitudes of man may have played a more decisive role, for one feels that there has been a toning down of the lyrical impulse of Western man in recent decades, a decrease in his wish to sing his verse and rhyme it and to conform to a regular sequence of rhythm. But the universal, even cosmic situations which have produced these influences need not, indeed in all likelihood will not, persist in producing the same kind of reaction, and a return to a more bouncing rhythm of life and expression is inevitable. Another reason for the change from metrical measures and rhymes is perhaps the temporary satiety with the already overworked metrical rhythms of poetry. The rather crude protest of the American poet Charles Henri Ford is significant in this respect: "Poet, don't rhyme. Poets don't rhyme. Poetry doesn't rhyme - any more. The saturation point has been reached! One more rhyme and I'll vomit."[121]

The Prose Poem and Free Verse: The terms "prose poem", "poem in prose" or "poème en prose" in French, and "free verse" or "vers libre" in French, are used to designate two different art forms. The prose poem of recent times in the West appeared earlier than the modern free verse. In France the rules of French versification which the Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics describes as "tyrannical" produced "a strong, if gradual reaction - first in poetic prose, then prose poem, then vers libéré, and finally vers libre".[122] This is not the same order in which these forms, at least what modern Arabs have of them (for they do not seem to have anything formally recognized as vers libéré)* appeared in Arabic. Poetic

* Unless one regarded the poetry liberated only from the two hemistich form or that of fixed pattern but not fully liberated in language or content or in both and not adventurous in form as vers libéré. Under this much of Nizār Qabbāni's poetry and that of numerous others would fall.

prose, al-nathr al-shi'ri in Arabic is a prose style with a touch of the imaginative. It is pervaded by a kind of emotion which can be described as poetic, but which does not arrive at the emotional tension typical of poetry. This style can pervade a novel, a short story, an essay, and is particularly typified by the fact that it does not belong to a closed entity, but can stretch throughout a long work. Gibrān's novels are a very good example of this style. The translation of the term "free verse" in Arabic, which is "al-shi'r al-hurr" is used for the metrical free verse, as has been already established in this work,* and the Arabic term "al-shi'r al-manthūr" is used to describe the English free verse. This latter has already been described above. The important thing to stress here is that al-shi'r al-manthūr appeared quite early in the century, the term being used for the first time, probably by Jurji Zaidān, as early as 1905, in his description of al-Rīḥāni's experiment.[124] Al-shi'r al-manthūr, like the English free verse, is without metre, but may employ rhyme sometimes as a decorative agent, although usually it is rhymeless. This genre, like the later genre in Arabic, the prose poem, is a direct adoption from Western poetry and has been greatly influenced by poetic translations from foreign languages,[125] a phenomenon also present behind

* Ever since Abū Shādi started his experiments in the poem of many metres, the term "al-shi'r al-hurr" has been used in modern Arabic writings on poetry. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah took it out of its former hazy context and gave it to the new metrical innovations. However, critics like J.I. Jabrā, are not in agreement with her on this term. The term "al-shi'r al-hurr", Jabrā contended, is a "literal translation of the Western terms "free verse" in English, and "vers libre" in French. It was given in the West to a poetry free of both metre and rhyme". The protagonists of "free verse" in Arabic, he insists, are only men like Muḥammad al-Māghūṭ, Taufīq Ṣāyigh and the writer himself.[123] However, despite the fact that the English and French use of the term is different from that in Arabic, the latter seems to be more appropriate because it uses the word verse which denotes the presence of a certain metrical structure. Moreover, it has gained validity in Arabic through usage. Jabrā has not volunteered to substitute a new term for the new, metrical form in Arabic which most poets and writers call "Shi'r hurr".

the development of these similar genres in other languages.[126] When written on the page, al-shi'r al-manthūr looks like a poem with short lines at the end of which the reader often pauses.

Qasīdat al-nathr is a term used for the first time in 1960,[127] and looks new in Arabic, although it is at least as old as the Quran for many of the Makki sūras could well belong to it.[128] However, as a self-conscious genre, deliberately different from al-shi'r al-manthūr it began to be written only in the late fifties.[129] The Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics defines it aptly as

> a composition able to have any or all of the features of a lyric, except that it is put on the page - though not conceived of - as prose. It differs from poetic prose in that it is short and compact, from free verse in that it has, usually, more pronounced rhythm, sonorous effects, imagery, and density of expression. It may contain even inner rhymes and metrical runs. Its length, generally, is from half a page (one or two paragraphs) to three or four pages, i.e. that of the average lyrical poem.[130]

Eliot, describing why Anabasis is a prose poem says:

> ... Anabasis is poetry. Its sequences, its logic of imagery, are those of poetry and not of prose; and in consequence - at least the two matters are very closely allied - the declamation, the system of stresses and pauses, which is partially exhibited by the punctuation and spacing, is that of poetry and not of prose.[131]

To differentiate between the form of free verse (the Western version) and the prose poem, E. Dujardin said: "Le poème en prose était la tentative de libérer la poésie prenant la prose pour point de départ; le vers libre et le verset représentent la même tentative en partant du

vers..."[132] * The definitions of Western writers on the prose poem are relevant to the Arabic version of it in that Arab writers, when describing qasīdat al-nathr lean heavily on Western writings on the subject. Arab writers have particularly insisted on density, compactness, and an organic unity in the poem in prose which is a closed entity.[133] The poet of qasīdat al-nathr must avoid elucidations and clarifications,[134] says Adūnīs, a description which fits all poetry. The rhythm of the poem in prose is varied and new, depending on parallelisms, repetitions, accent, sound pattern, assonance, alliteration, and one of its first structural conditions is to be continuous, with no definite ends to every line (as in al-shi'r al-manthūr) but is written on the page as prose is.[135] There is a marked difference in rhythm especially noticeable when the two are read aloud. The sentence is also varied according to the mood. There is the paradoxical sentence, full of surprise, which is meant to produce shock; there is the inspiring sentence to express dreams, and there is the lyrical sentence to express pain and joy as well as all strong emotions.[136] Unsi al-Ḥāj asserts that the poem in prose appeared firstly as a result of the weakness of traditional poetry; secondly from the feeling that the world is changed and changing, imposing new attitudes which in turn impose new forms; thirdly as a result of translations from Western poetry and fourthly as a /development/ from the poetry of the Arabic free verse, some of which has succeeded in approximating to common speech.[137] The poem in prose is the result and the completion, he

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* European poets of the twentieth century who employed free verse are Rilke, Appolimaire, Eliot, Ezra Pound, William Carlos William, Auden and numerous others. Some of the most famous protagonists of the prose poem are Baudelaire in his Spleen de Paris (1869); Rimbaud whose best work is his prose poetry, in Les Illuminations (1886) and Une Saison en enfer (1873); Mallarmé in Divagations (1897); and Saint John Perse in Les Eloges (1911), Anabase (1922); Exil (1942); Pluies (1943); Neiges (1944); Vents (1946), etc., and many others.

assures us, of the efforts begun a century ago to free not only Arabic poetry, but also first and foremost, the Arab poet.[138] The poet in a changing world is in need of a language which can embody his new attitudes,[139] "the free poet's language must for ever follow him... the poet never sleeps on an /old and outworn/ language".[140]

The two writers depended in their ideas on Suzanne Bernard in her informative book Le Poème en Prose de Baudelaire jusqu'a nos Jours (Paris, 1959). But they speak with conviction and enthusiasm and finally become so passionate as to make of qasīdat al-nathr the greatest form ever arrived at. Says al-Ḥāj, " قصيدة النثر هي اللغة الاخيرة في سلم طموحه (الشاعر)".[141] And Adūnīs raises the poet of prose far above the poet of verse:

فشاعر الوزن ... منسجم يقبل بقواعد السلف ويتبناها . بينما شاعر النثر متمرد ورافض : فهو ليس تلميذا ، بل خالق وسيد "[142]

This sounds rather bombastic , for how can one be convinced by it when the writer himself persists in writing most of his poetry in metre?*

The notion expressed by al-Ḥāj and implied by Adūnīs that the poem in prose in Arabic is the result of long experimentation in the form of poetry does not hold much ground either. All the forms employing a prose medium for poetic expression in Arabic seem to be the result rather of direct Western influences than of a gradual and inevitable development. It is only the free verse in Arabic, which is metrical, that can be considered with any accuracy as a result of continual experimentation in the poetic form, as has been demonstrated above.[143] The development of prose forms in Arabic did not take the same course. Both the contribution of al-Rīḥāni and Gibrān have been discussed already.[144] Al-Rīḥāni is remembered as the father of al-shi'r al-manthūr in Arabic.

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* As we see in his two later diwans, Kitāb al-Tahawwulāt wa 'l-Hijrah fī Aqālīm al-Nahār wa 'l-Lail, Beirut, 1965, and Al-Masrah wa 'l-Marāyā, Beirut ;1968.

But although he tried to imitate Whitman, his contribution in this field does not seem to have left a genuine effect on other authors; it only set a precedent and introduced the idea of a prose medium for poetic expression. Gibrān, on the other hand, had great poetic gifts and his achievement left a profound influence on his generation and the generations after. But he had spent his early, formative years in America and one can venture to suggest that he may have lost the chance to acquire the metrical rhythms of Arabic poetry which are imbued in Arab children at a very early age. The verse he wrote, one feels, does not show a good command of metrical rhythm nor the arresting mastery of style and language displayed by his marvellous prose. It does not seem to come to him with the same spontaneity and richness. But Gibrān's creativity knew no bounds. It poured itself out in an overwhelming flow of Romantic poetic expression, prompted by a great emotional force. Only a poet in absolute and instinctive command of the verse measures of his own poetry can express this in verse. Moreover, the Arab poetic idiom at the beginning of this century was not yet ready to change over easily to a Romantic idiom. This is clearly seen in Muṭrān's contribution, where the Romantic tendencies are constantly stifled by the neo-Classical expression, form and attitudes. All this has been discussed above.[145] Gibrān's great originality was not able, so it proved, to channel his great Romantic force into a metrical pattern of abundance, fluidity and elasticity. His readings in Western poetry, where a prose medium for the poetic expression was already well regarded, as well as in the Bible, must have given him the necessary encouragement to pour forth his poetic energy through a prose medium which rose, in certain pieces, to the heights of poetry.[146]

Gibrān's example has been followed by many aspirants, but few arrived at any real creative value. In the third and fourth decades, Arabic verse was sufficiently liberated to embrace the Romantic and even

the Symbolist experience. It had acquired plasticity, greater lyrical fluidity and a more modern idiom. Its best poets were now living in the Arab world. Gibrān's peculiar situation was not to be repeated. Poetry seemed to have entered a phase of great experimentation and was seeking, consciously and unconsciously, to arrive at contemporaneousness with world poetry. The Arab metrics, probably some of the severest metrical strictures of any language, seemed to be the greatest challenge of the age. It was apparent that the revolution in the form of Arabic poetry could not take place by abandoning form, but by changing it; hence the experiments with the poem of many metres, with blank verse and with strophic verse. Therefore one can say, from an historical point of view, that the shi'r manthūr was not a natural development of modern Arabic poetry, brought about by artistic or psychological needs. The resort of Western poets to write in a prose medium was accomplished by poets (some of whom had great dimensions) who wrote first in verse, such as Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Mallarmé. The arrival at vers libre, for example, is described by Gustav Kahn (probably its first precursor) as 'a logical development' proceding from poetic prose.[147] The history of prose poetry in Arabic does not show the same aspiration of verse writers towards a prose medium. With the exception of Gibrān, most writers of prose poetry or poetic prose limited themselves to this medium, until the end of the fifties when poets like Adūnīs, Y. al-Khāl and S. Abī Shaqrā experimented with a prose medium also.

The experiments in al-shi'r al-manthūr which were being carried on all the time since the twenties,* seemed before the fifties, to play a

* As early as 1922 Ḥabīb Salāmah published an anthology of prose poetry, Al-Shi'r al-Manthūr at Cairo in which poetic pieces by Gibrān, May (Mary Ziyādah), Rashīd Nakhlah, Salāmah himself, and others appeared. In 1925 Munīr Ḥusāmi published his own volume, 'Arsh al-Hubb wa 'l-Jamāl, also at Cairo. This was probably the first volume of shi'r manthūr to appear by a non-Mahjar author. This art form was encouraged in the forties and fifties by Albert Adīb in his magazine Al-Adīb, Beirut.

less serious role, and neither critics nor defenders of the Arab poetic traditions paid much attention to them. The literary climate was more liberal and the attempts themselves less pretentious. In the fifties the various experiments in al-shi'r al-manthūr, and later on in qaṣīdat al-nathr, took on a more serious and determined role. Authors of al-shi'r al-manthūr such as Ilyās Khalīl Zakariyyā, Nuqūlā Qurbān, Fu'ād Sulaimān, Ilyās Massūḥ and Ibrāhīm Shukrallah published their poetic pieces in magazines and newspapers, some of which arrived at a good artistic level. But it was with the publication of volumes of prose poetry, which claimed a fully fledged poetic status, that prose poetry began to suffer and to present a challenge to public poetic standards. Siryāl, the Surrealist volume of prose poetry by Orkhān Muyassar and 'Ali al-Nāṣir, had already thrown out this challenge in Muyassar's introduction which regarded metrical verse as incapable of conveying modern ideas and expressions.[148] This, of course, had already been voiced much earlier by al-Rīḥāni when he said that metre was stultifying to creativity.[149] However, al-Rīḥāni's claim did not impose itself on the mind, because it was isolated and was not supported by the evidence of abundant prose poetry. But now authors of prose poetry were increasing and drawing more attention. Thurayyā Malḥas published her first volume, Al-Nashīd al-Tā'ih at Beirut in 1949. This and her other contribution had a Surrealist involvement which reminded the reader of Siryāl. In 1952 Albert Adīb's volume Limann was published at Cairo, and in 1954 Tawfīq Ṣāyigh published his first volume, Thalāthūn Qaṣīdah at Beirut. In 1959 two more volumes appeared in Beirut, Muḥammad al-Māghūṭ's Ḥuzn fī Dau' al-Qamar, and J.I. Jabrā's Tammūz fi 'l-Madīnah. A third volume, Maut al-Ākharīn by Riyāḍ Najīb al-Rayyis appeared also in Beirut, in 1962.*

* Thurayyā Malḥas published two more volumes both at Beirut, Qurbān, 1952, and Malḥamat al-Insān, 1961. Ṣāyigh published Al-Qaṣīdah Kāf which contains his most varied poetry in 1960, and Mu'allaqat Tawfīq

(Continued on next page)

Qasīdat al-Nathr was propagated mainly by Adūnīs, and Unsi al-Ḥāj, but poets like Yūsuf al-Khāl and S. Abī Shaqrā also wrote it. Al-Ḥāj is the only one among these who writes only in prose. The others, known more as poets of verse, include their prose poems in their verse volumes.[151] Al-Ḥāj has published two volumes already, Lann and Al-Ra's al-Maqṭū' (Beirut, 1963).

These experiments were supported by a strong critical theorization which based itself eloquently on sophisticated Western concepts of similar experiments, and were backed by a strong poetic platform represented by Shi'r magazine. Its better known exponents were presented to the reading public, not as authors of shi'r manthūr, but as poets who were in the vanguard of the experimentalists.[152] And either through implication or through explicit statements, prose poetry was often elevated above verse. Khālidah Sa'īd, a Syrian critic, wrote a series of essays which appeared regularly in Shi'r covering a variety of experiments. (These were collected in 1960 in a volume entitled Al-Bahth 'an al-Judhūr, which is

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* Footnote continued from previous page.

Sāyigh in 1963, both at Beirut. Jabrā published Al-Madār al-Mughlaq at Beirut in 1964. Other volumes appeared during these years overshadowed by the above mentioned works which received more critical backing and were perhaps superior to some of the lesser known experiments. However, these latter experiments merit further study, for some of them may reveal at least some interesting attempts at change. A volume by Ilyās al-Jubaili for example, entitled Al-Farāgh al-Abyad, Beirut, 1961, tries to apply T.S. Eliot's concept that "the ghost of some simple metre should lurk behind the arras in even the 'freest' verse... freedom is only truly freedom when it appears against the background of an artificial limitation",[150] His experiment does have the ghost of one metre or another hovering in the background and affecting the whole rhythm of the stanzas. He also employs rhyme much like stanzaic forms. However, this experiment is interesting more from the point of view of rhythm than content. Other experiments are those of 'Umar Anīs al-Ṭabbā' in his Fī Ma'bad al-Qalb, Beirut, n.d. (but, as the author says in the last page, written between 1947 and 1951). Perhaps the early date of this attempt explains why the author had not got rid of some of the Gibranian emotionalism and style. A volume of angry comments on bourgois life and morality was published by Ibrāhīm Salāmah entitled Janāzat Kalb, Beirut, n.d. [but after 1958]. It was his second volume after Qasā'id min Khashab, but in much the same line of protest.

one of the finest volumes of applied criticism to be written in the fifties.) In an essay on Muḥammad al-Māghūṭ's volume, Huzn fī Dau' al-Qamar, she says:

> The main elements of the old poetry are rhyme and metre. They are the receptacle which holds the poetic material. Some modern poets wanting to abandon them, broke the receptacle, and poetry poured out alive from their hands... What are the elements which the poet used to replace the old ones? The poet who rejects the purely material elements of form has to appeal to the reader by more transparent and penetrating means capable of carrying him to the new world created by the modern poet, instead of sufficing himself by turning /the reader's/ head as in the old poetry, so that when he /the reader/ woke up, he found nothing. [153]

Writing in 1960 on Tawfīq Ṣāyigh's first volume, Thalāthūn Qaṣīdah (1954), Jabrā I. Jabrā says that "free verse /meaning al-shi'r al-manthūr/ has very few friends and many enemies... But the coming years will see this poetry impose itself on the negative attitude of critics." [154] He then says that this poetry:

> is a rebellion not only against 'amūd al-shi'r, and its lyrical rhythm, but also against its emptiness of the experience of modern man. If you want to innovate, then you want it not for its own sake, but because you have something to say which cannot be said unless you do so. And when you innovate, carried on the flux of your meanings and discoveries, then you will throw away the old completely and unhesitatingly. [155]

Khālidah Sa'īd insists that prose poetry is more difficult to write and "only a truly gifted poet can overcome its difficulty". [156] One might contend here that while it is difficult to write anything poetically effective in prose, it is even more difficult to embody the new meanings, images and language of the modern poet in metre. The idea of a revolution in the form of poetry is valid when the poetic materials have become sufficiently different from those in current use, and the quotations from Eliot given above elucidate this well. It was the free verse movement which translated this need into action. Compared to the traditional two hemistich form, it is a most drastic revolution which had

hardly begun in the early fifties. Even up till now it is still in its infancy and many developments of its potential forms and combinations are yet to take place. One feels that Jabrā, as a principle, rejects the use of metre in poetry, and emphasises the artistic value of prose as a poetic medium. This attitude has its counterpart in the West.* However, the pronouncement of absolute judgments on art are always very dangerous, yet one knows that in every revolution, its protagonists will go to extremes. Metrical measures are not an easily attainable medium for all, and many poetically inclined individuals never acquire them.** However, there should be nothing to prevent them from expressing themselves in the only remaining medium for them, prose. It is impoverishing for any art to limit its scope of expression.

The idea of the renovation of the poetic language through resorting to a prose medium, as discussed by al-Ḥāj, is not an acceptable hypothesis, for the question arises as to what form the writers of prose poetry will adopt when the language of their own medium becomes stale, as it must surely do one day. Nor is this the only objection, but it would be impossible here to go into long arguments on every point of discussion.

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* Walt Whitman's writings on the subject are significant in this respect: "In my opinion the time has arrived to essentially break down the barriers of form between prose and poetry... the truest and greatest Poetry (while subtly and necessarily always rhythmic and distinguished easily enough) can never again in the English language, be express'd in arbitrary and rhythmic metre... While admitting that the venerable and heavenly forms of chiming versification have in their time play'd great and fitting parts... it is, notwithstanding, certain to me that the day of such conventional rhyme is ended."[157] In his view the poetry of the future will resume "that other medium of expression, more flexible, more eligible" and will soar "to the freer, vast, diviner heaven of prose".[158]

** Tawfīq Ṣāyigh personally told the present writer in 1958 that he has no ear for the metres of Arabic poetry. However, his prose poetry has its own particular rhythms, which are both semantic and emotional, and often quite pronounced.

As regards the prose which aspires to poetry in Arabic, some of it has succeeded in employing a language which is new and not weighted down with over-use. But the novelty in it is not always indicative of real creativity. In much of this contribution there is too much deliberation and a conscious quest for originality and, as in the writings of al-Ḥāj himself, a persistent desire to shock. The rejection of forms and hackneyed expressions and images, in an age of rebellion, becomes for the most part instinctive, and a good poet usually rejects such things spontaneously. However, most prose poetry in the fifties and sixties has been able to shake off the extremely strong Gibranian tradition in language, tradition, emotion and imagery, and to emerge capable of expressing itself in modern terms.

Moreover, the idea that it is through prose poetry that the language can finally be liberated and made to approximate to daily speech can prove not to hold much ground. In the poetry of Adūnīs, for example, there is shown the same quality of language in his prose poetry as in his verse. There is indeed very little affinity between his poetry and the social idiom, and his language is more Classical than most poets. Like Saint John Perse by whom he is profoundly influenced,[159] his language is "rich and unusual",[160] and like him, he seems to be a lover of "rhetorique profonde".

The resort to the sporadic use of colloquial words which Tawfīq Ṣāyigh sometimes uses, is perhaps more easily attained in a prose medium, but the ease is never an attribute in itself. Nizār Qabbāni, in a verse medium has also used many words from the vernacular. The value of the method of the two poets is the vividness and poignancy of their choice of words. Ṣāyigh usually uses a colloquial word at moments of tension, which can be effective at times: "محمست ايامي"، "بست حبيبي"[161] "تشحشطا".

However, he can use archaic or obsolete words such as "حيث الطابيين" "لانك الصقوعة"[162] "ارگان اقفاص", where arkān means mice, and

The supporters of a prose medium for poetry contend that there is a greater freedom of rhythmic manipulation in prose poetry. These rhythms are described by Jabrā as orchestraic, symphonic or rhapsodic, and the poet, in his dependence on the rhythm of thought and imagery, completely avoids the monotony of metrical measures.[163] This theory, however, does not seem valid, for the prose medium is not always capable of avoiding monotony, and there is a great deal of monotony of rhythm in both Whitman and Gibrān. Prose, because it does not depend on artificial limitations imposed externally, will, sooner or later, acquire with every writer, a much more personal and constant rhythm than that which particularises the verse which a good poet writes. This, if applied to imaginative writing, can often be monotonous.* C.P. Smith has noticed the failure of the free verse poet (in English, therefore non metrical) to "achieve that freedom in variation which its supporters would claim".[164] He argues that once the metrical rhythms of a language are mastered, they become instinctive, and "while accepting subconsciously the metrical pattern which /they/ supply, the poet can write as freely and uniquely as any orator, or essayist, or rhapsodist in poetic prose".[165]

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* Many Western writers would oppose this view. Other than Whitman's ideas on the subject, some of which are quoted above, H. Read speaks of vers libre as substituting the "element of proportion... for the element of regularity".[166] Two things draw one's attention here. Firstly that the element of proportion is present in all art, even in the least symmetrical of it, and secondly that the very presence of artistic rules denies the freedom supposed to be found in a prose medium; Eliot's idea that there is no freedom in art is significant here.[167] E. Dujardin sees in vers libre "a form able to rhythmify or derhythmify itself instantly",[168] and V.Cerny sees the spontaneous expression of inner rhythm in this form to be fighting against "formalism", and to stand "implicitly, for the self-assertion of poetic content".[169] Parker Tyler says "The high inspiration of prose preserves the right to change its rules (or its 'waves') without notice" and asserts that the "poetic voice is freer in the genealogy of the prose tradition..."[170]

Most contemporary Arab critics have not yet recognised the contribution of prose poets in Arabic, although probably none of them would deny the value of the poetry of Saint John Perse, for example. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah attacked qaṣīdat al-nathr calling it a freak, confusing it with al-shi'r al-manthūr and insisting that it is merely prose and has no claim to poetry.[171] Although Nāzik is justified in rejecting the persistent attacks of the exponants of these forms on metrical poetry and their assertion that prose poetry will be the poetry of the future,[172] her insistence that it is only metre that differentiates between prose and poetry is not valid. However, one must insist here that among the many examples of prose presented as poetry in the fifties and sixties, only a small proportion is really elevated to the level of poetry, with such poems as Tawfīq Ṣāyigh's "Min al-A'māq Ṣarakhtu ilaik yā Maut"[173] and Adūnīs's "Marthiyyat al-Ayyām al-Hāḍirah",[174] in the lead.

M. al-Nuwaihi wrote a chapter in his book, Qadiyyat al-Shi'r al-Jadīd on the essential unity between poetry and metre, showing, rightly, that when people are agitated, they tend to express themselves in regular rhythms.[175] This idea has been put forward by al-Zahāwi, as has been mentioned above.[176] However, Nuwaihi overlooked the facts that: firstly, some individuals never acquire or master metrical rhythms yet can be poetically aroused and capable of imaginative expression on a poetic level. Secondly, that poetry is not always the outcome of a particularly aroused emotional state, unless Nuwaihi means here, which he does not seem to do, the particular emotional state which the poetic moment creates in the poet. This state although highly rhythmical and often, in a poet in possession of the metrical measures of his own language, inducive of a spontaneous metrical rhythm to accompany the act of creation, can surely produce other kinds of rhythms. (Hence the reiterations of words and phrases, the parallelisms, synthetic, antithetic and synonymous, the vocatives and

refrains, the alliterations and assonance in prose poetry.) For one cannot believe that Gibrān was not in a truly poetic state when he wrote his best work. But it must be emphasised here that poetry is not always nor necessarily the direct outcome of an externally aroused emotional state, for otherwise, how can one explain the poems which write themselves, falling upon the poet as if from the blue, sometimes at moments of great calm?

M. Badawi's reasons for rejecting al-shi'r al-manthūr are more potent. These have been discussed above,[177] His concept of an order represented by the form of the poem, which controls the emotional experience of a poet is valid. Form channels the poetic expression and controls it from sprawling and flowing in all directions, and it is the lack of metrical form that has allowed Gibrān, who was poetically extremely gifted, to write often in a diluted fashion, and sometimes lacking in poetic tension. But when a poet in prose is able to control his emotional experience and transmit it with skill and conciseness, there should be no valid reason to reject his work. However, it must be remembered that such a poet is not easy to come by.[178]

It is never easy to foretell what events will take place in art, but in the question of form in contemporary Arabic poetry, one feels rather confident in contemplating its near future. Contemporary poets will keep on experimenting in free metrical forms, which are still largely unexplored, and the coming decades should see, one feels, great adventures in Arabic metrics. On the other hand, those who either through an incapacity to master the metrical measures, or through preference, or for both reasons, express themselves in a prose medium, will no doubt, keep on producing imaginative prose, some of which will perhaps be elevated to the level of poetry. There seems to be no indication that there will be a general preference for a prose medium among poets (the

public are even less inclined to accept these forms) before the immense potentialities of the numerous Arabic metres(with their derivatives) have been fully explored. Only when this has happened, will poets start urgently looking for a different form. Whether this will be poetic prose, or even more ornate and symmetrical metrical measures will depend on many factors: the mood of the age, the more dominant themes and genres of poetry at the time, the extent of the metrical innovations already effected, etc., but at the moment, there is no artistic need for a dominant shift towards a prose medium for Arabic poetry. The real need in the poetic form at the moment is to try to achieve less musical results to suit a profoundly changed mood of life, but this must first be achieved within a metrical framework.*

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* Ghāli Shukri, in an article entitled "Shi'runā 'l-Ḥadīth, ilā Ayn ?", and published in Hiwār in 1965, seems to find the prose poets in modern Arabic poetry the representatives of the highest cultural achievement among modern Arabs. To him they are [179]:

" مدرسة التجاوز والتخطي التي تعبر اسوار حضارتنا بقصد الذوبان في اعلى مستوى حضاري بلغه العالم المعاصر ،هروبا من مرحلة التخلف المرير التي نجتازها نحن."

This is singling them out completely from all others who are described as living in a bitter state of retardation, a statement not backed by him with any evidence. They have, he asserts, uncompromisingly rejected the heritage and linked themselves to the modern universal vision in poetry, (whatever that may be), but without " مواكبة لواقعهم الخاص ",[180] as if this, had it been true, were a virtue. But it is not true of most of them, for most of them are as involved with the realities of life and experience (which, in order to materialise, must stem from their own lives in their own world and from nowhere else) as any of the other poets. Ghāli Shukri goes on to say that these authors

181 " تمردوا حياتيا اولا على كافة اشكال المطلق من مقدسات التراث الى مقدسات الواقع الراهن . "

He does not tell us what exactly in their lives shows this utter rebellion, but assures us that their rebellion in art was equal to it, for they

182 " اقبلوا يحطمون الصياغة الخليلية قديمها وجديدها ،ويمزقون الارتباط " العقائدي " بالتراث ـ لتحرر ذواتهم اولا ،وهي مصدر كل شعر ،من اي قيد موهوم ... "

Ghāli Shukri then reaches new heights of eloquence when he says:

183 " ان شعراء هذا التيار قلة نادرة من المثقفين ثقافة جادة في بلادنا ،كأدوني الحاج ومحمد الماغوط وجبرا ابراهيم جبرا وتوفيق صايغ ... "

One wonders what haste persuaded G. Shukri to gather all these highly diverse authors into one group, for the only thing they have in common is the fact that they all use only prose as a medium for imaginative writings. One would hesitate before regarding the absolutely delightful but highly instinctive writings of Muḥammad al-Māghūṭ, for example, as exhibiting a proud intellectual attitude. The idea, moreover, that they belong to the extreme left[184] and even transcend it, remains, of course, a highly untenable generalisation.

Footnotes

1. The present writer wrote a long study of al-rajaz metre which she published in Al-Ādāb, April, 1959, p.13 et seq., under the title "Baḥr al-Rajaz fī Shi'rinā 'l-Mu'āṣir"; see also an article by Rajā' al-Naqqāsh on the same metre in ibid., February, 1959.

2. See her chapter "Al-Shi'r al-Ḥurr Shi'r dhū Shaṭr Wāḥid", Qadāyā, pp.73-6.

3. Ibid., p.120.

4. Ghāli Shukri, for example, called Nāzik's attitude "the new conventionalism" (al-salafiyyah al-jadīdah), "Ṣirā' al-Mutanāqiḍāt fī Ṣufūf al-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth", Hiwār, No.20, January-February, 1966, p.90; L. 'Awaḍ, in his article "Thaurat al-'Arūḍ" called her a member of the intelligent, progressive right-wing, see Dirāsāt 'Arabiyyah wa Gharbiyyah, Cairo, 1965, p.121.

5. Bint al-Shāṭi', Al-Shā'irah al-'Arabiyyah al-Mu'āṣirah, pp.127-33; however, she declared that she would not explain the prosodical problems discussed by Nāzik; instead, she paraphrased them.

6. Qadiyyat al-Shi'r al-Jadīd, 161-228.

7. See Yūsuf al-Khāl, Shi'r, No.24, Autumn 1962, "Qaḍāyā 'l-Shi'r al-Mu'āṣir" pp.138-52; Jabrā "Al-Shi'r al-Ḥurr al-Naqd al-Khāṭi'", Al-Rihlah al-Thāminah, pp.7-19; Ismā'īl, Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āṣir, pp.105-8, 115-7, 119, etc. L. 'Awaḍ, loc.cit.; Ghāli Shukri, op.cit., p.90 et passim.
For examples of moderate, positive discussions of some of Nāzik's ideas see Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā 'l-Shi'r, pp.317-8; and 'Abd al-Jabbār 'Abbās, "Mushkilatān fī 'Arūḍ al-Shi'r al-'Arabi", Al-Ādāb, December, 1963, pp.29-33.

8. L. 'Awaḍ, op.cit., p.124.

9. See an article by the present writer entitled "Al-Naqd baina 'l-Ḥurriyyah wa 'l-Taqyīd", Al-Ādāb, June, 1959, pp.13-6; it was written as a rejoinder to Nāzik's article, "Minbar al-Naqd", ibid., April, 1959, p.20 et seq. See also the comment of Sidqi Ismā'īl on Nāzik's article and her method of criticism, ibid., May, 1959, in Al-Ādāb's constant feature "Qara'tu 'l-'Adad al-Māḍi min al-Ādāb".

10. Abārīq Muhashshamah had twenty-eight poems in al-kāmil out of forty-one poems, six in al-ramal, and the rest in diverse metres. Twenty-six poems were in free verse. It is interesting to note that Salāh 'Abd al-Ṣabūr in Al-Nās fī Bilādi (1957) had nine poems in al-kāmil, and eight in al-rajaz, among thirty poems. Twenty poems were free.

11. On ideas concerning the origin of al-rajaz and on its history and uses, see 'Abdullah al-Ṭayyib, Al-Murshid ilā Ash'ār al-'Arab, Vol.I, 246-63. On its less elevated position and the differentiation between it and shi'r see Ibn Rashīq, Al-'Umdah, Vol.I, 185-6.

12. See Al-'Iqd al-Farīd, Vol.III, 145.

13. See Khafāji, Fann al-Shi'r, Vol.I, 116n.

14. Unshūdat al-Maṭar, pp.164 and 160, respectively.

15. Qadāyā, pp.103-6.

16. Ibid., pp.149-52; Ismā'īl contradicts her, see op.cit., pp.119-20.

17. See Al-'Iqd al-Farīd, Vol.III, p.146.

18. Op.cit., pp.86-8.

19. See the article of the present writer, "Baḥr al-Rajaz fī Shi'rinā 'l-Mu'āṣir".

20. Ibrāhīm Anīs, Mūsīqā 'l-Shi'r, p.321.

21. Edited by A. Preminger and others, Princeton, 1965, Under ELISION.

22. Qasā'id Min Nizār Qabbāni, first edition, Beirut, 1956, pp.17-8.

23. Ibid., pp.50-4.

24. Ibid., pp.99-102.

25. Ibid., pp.173-87.

26. Nuwaihi, op.cit., p.245; and 'Awaḍ, "Thaurat al-'Arūḍ", p.125.

27. Nuwaihi, op.cit., p.244 mentions also the influence of daily speech.

28. Al-'Urf al-Ṭayyib fī Sharḥ Dīwān Abi al-Ṭayyib, edited and annonated by Nāṣīf al-Yāziji, Beirut, 1305 A.H., pp.227-9.

29. Lam Yabqā Illā 'l-I'tirāf, Beirut, 1965, p.89.

30. Op.cit., p.86.

31. The description of A. al-Ṭayyib of this metre as noisy is apt provided it is applied to the old khabab; see op.cit., p.83. However his further description of it as having a mean standard ibid., cannot be accepted; no metre has an absolute value of goodness or ugliness, but it is the poet's manipulation of it that decides its suitability.

32. Ibid.

33. See above pp. 528n and 778.

34. See the interesting discussion of Nuwaihi on this poem, op.cit., pp.239-43.

35. See her discussion of her use of fā'ilu and her acceptance of it, Qadāyā, pp.107-11.

36. Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb in Shanāshīl Ibnat al-Jalabi, second edition, Beirut, 1965, p.19; see also Ṣalāh 'Abd al-Ṣabūr in Ma'sāt al-Ḥallāj Beirut, 1965, where he makes good use of al-khabab with this kind of zihāf; see his comment on it p.208.

37. See what Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Badawi says about this point, Rasā'il Min London, pp.11-3.

38. Aghāni Mihyār al-Dimashqi, Beirut, 1961, p.115.

39. Ibid., p.120.

40. Op.cit., p.245.

41. Ibid., pp.144-5; for his whole idea of accentual measures see pp. 232-49; see also an attack on this idea of Nuwaihi by Hādi Tu'mah, "Al-Taf'īlah ... Bid'ah li Tabdīd al-Shi'r al-'Arabi", Al-Aqlām magazine, September, 1966, pp.133 and 135-6.

42. Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics, under METER, p.498.

43. See above pp.754-5.

44. Qadāyā, p.66.

45. Al-Sayyāb in "Risālah min Maqbarah" has used the darbs of fā'ilān, fa'lun and fā'ilun; see Unshūdat al-Maṭar, pp.78-81. Other poets were even less consistent; Adūnīs, while writing rajaz, suddenly uses the sarī' darb fā'ilun, see Aghāni Mihyār al-Dimashqi, p.144.

46. See Al-'Iqd al-Farīd, III, 147; Khafāji, op.cit., I, 130-1.

47. N. al-Malā'ikah rejects the variation on the darb in the same poem, see Qadāyā, pp.63-72.

48. I. Ismā'īl, op.cit., pp.88-9, declares his dislike of the use of fā'ilun, and thinks that it causes dissonance; but many successful experiments with this metre disprove this; Ismā'īl's objection must be regarded only as the personal taste of the author.

50. This poem has been quoted by S.M. Stern from Amari's Biblioteca Arabo-Siculo in his article The Poem of Five Metres, Palermo, 1961, pp.6-7. All the references below are to be found ibid., pp.6-11.

51. Where he has وجهه البدر طالعا which does not rhyme with the equivalent strophes مثل روض مغدوق ، وغزال مشنّف etc.

52. Shanāshīl, pp.77-80.

53. He comments on this on p.80 n., but it should not mean that the change of emphasis was not unconscious at the beginning; see also Ismā'īl's discussion of this poem, op.cit., pp.90-3.

54. From an unpublished poem by the present writer.

55. Rasā'il Min London, p.14.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., p.10.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid., p.6.

60. See what he says about his method, ibid., p.7.

61. Ibid., from his poem "'Indamā Tabzughu Shamsu 'l-Ghad", p.22.

62. See for example his poem "Al-Ladhī Yaj'al al-Ṭuyūr Tughanni", ibid., p.29.

63. Ibid., pp.41-6.

64. Ibid., pp.20-1.

65. See in Shanāshil, his poem "Ha..Ha..Ho..", pp.54-8.

66. Al-Ma'bad al-Gharīq, Beirut, 1962, p.113, from his poem "Afyā' Jaykūr". The same deviation takes place once in another poem in al-basīṭ, "Risālah", in Iqbāl, Beirut, 1965, p.48, where he says فيها المغني scanning mustaf'ilatun.

67. See Jabrā, Al-Rihlah al-Thāminah, p.17; see also Nuwaihi, op.cit., pp.193-206. Nuwaihi's discussion takes into account many vital points in the use of tadwīr including the emotional urgency which flows on from line to line (see pp.201-2) and the need of enjambment in dramatic and narrative poetry (see pp.200-1), and it should be read fully by the reader who wants to know about tadwīr in greater detail. On this subject see also what Ṣ. 'Abd al-Ṣabūr said in Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.7.

68. Northrop Frye in his introduction entitled "Lexis and Melos" to Sound and Poetry, a special number of the English Institute Essays 1956, and published 1957, discusses the influence of music and its particular characteristics on poets and their technique.

69. Ibid., p.xv.

70. Al-Sayyāb, Unshūdat al-Maṭar, pp.162-3.

71. By the present writer, see Al-'Audah min al-Nab' al-Hālim, Beirut, 1960, p.77, from the poem "Ba'da 'l-Jazr".

72. Op.cit., pp.75-6.

73. Ibid., pp.73 and 120-2.

74. Al-Nāy wa 'l-Rīḥ, Beirut, 1961, p.24, from his lovely poem "Al-Nāy wa 'l-Rīḥ fī Ṣauma'at Cambridge".

75. Ibid., p.65.

75a. Op.cit., pp.75-6

76. Qadāyā, p.93 et passim.

77. Ibid., pp.99-102; see the objections to her ideas by I. Ismā'īl, op.cit., pp.102-4 where he encourages the use of these numbers of feet; see also Nuwaihi's argument against her, op.cit., pp.206-8.

78. For a single example see Qarārat al-Maujah, her poem "Ṣalāt al-Ashbāḥ", pp.186-98.

79. See above pp. 285, 523-7 &569, footnote 83.

80. Qadāyā, p.163; see also Shajaratu 'l-Qamar, p.17.

81. Op.cit., p.210.

82. N. Qabbāni is particularly famous for poems in monorhyme; for examples from a single diwan see Habībati, second edition, Beirut, 1964, his poems "Sha'ri Sarīrun min Dhahab", "Qiṣṣat Khilāfātunā", "Ilā Qiddīsah" and "Ṣaut min al-Ḥarīm", pp.52-5, 117-21, 149-52 and 158-63 respectively.

83. It has been mentioned above that M.M. Badawi neglects rhyme completely; others like Y. al-Khāl and S. 'Abd al-Ṣabūr also do that occasionally; see Al-Nās fī Bilādi by 'Abd al-Ṣabūr, second edition, Cairo, 1962, his poem "Abi", pp.59-64, for a single example; for another single example from Yūsuf al-Khāl, see Qaṣā'id fi 'l-Arba'īn, Beirut, 1960, his poem "Ḥiwār ma'a 'l-Shayṭān", pp.23-7.

84. On the connection of rhyme with meaning see the essay of W.K. Wimsatt, Jr., "One Relation of Rhyme to Reason", published in Poetry: Form and Structure, Boston, 1964, pp.148-59.

85. Qadāyā, pp.26-7; so did Nuwaihi, op.cit., p.126 et seq.

86. Ibid., pp.27-32.

87. Op.cit., pp.129 et seq.; on the prosaic element in free verse see Qadāyā, p.163 et passim.

88. See above pp.851-3.

89. Northrop Frye, op.cit., p.xxvi.

90. Preface to Poetry, New York, 1946, p.120.

91. Al-Sayyāb, in his long poem "Al-Aslihah wa 'l-Aṭfāl", uses the two letters in effective alliteration or consonance; in the following, s and s are used to give the sound of innocent life and children's feet running in play:

١ ــ عصافير ام صبية تمرح
٢ ــ عليها سنا من غد يلمح
٣ ــ واقدامها العارية
٤ ــ مخـــــار يصلصل في ساقية
٥ ــ سرت عبر حقل من السنبـــل
٦ ــ وهمهمة الخبز في يوم عيد

Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.251; see also a variation on this overture, p.276. He also uses the gh in alliteration implying the voice of a baby as he utters the first sounds of infancy وغمغمة الام باسم الوليـــد
تناغيه فـــي يومه الاول

ibid., p.251; a similar use of gh by the present writer is to be found in "Bilā Judhūr", where the memories of a little girl with her grandfather bring about the innocent utterances of infancy implied by the following: كان يغليني ، يناغيني ، يغني لي لما كنت طفلـــــــــة
Al-'Audah, p.152.

92. See Frye, loc.cit.

93. Collected Essays in Literary Criticism, second edition, 1951, p.48. Quotations from him are all from pp.48-9.

94. Extract from the present writer's article, "Al-Naqd baina 'l-Ḥurriyyah wa 'l-Taqyīd", Al-Ādāb, June, 1959, pp.15-6.

95. Poetic Diction, p.155.

96. Under VERSE and PROSE, p.886.

97. Anabasis, by Saint John Perse, translated with a preface by T.S. Eliot, third edition, London, 1959, pp.15-6.

98. The Triple Thinkers, p.31.

99. Ibid.

100. Ibid., pp.32-3.

101. Barfield, op.cit., p.155 n mentions Hegel as an exception. In 1932, C.P. Smith published his book, Pattern and Variation in Poetry, (New York), in which he insists on the vitality of metrical measures; see his full argument for an "underlying pattern in verse", pp.230-8; especially p.238.

102. See above p. 828 .For another example see also Ibn Rashīq, Al-'Umdah, Vol.I, 19-27; his chapter on the greater value of poetry, "Fī Faḍl al-Shi'r".

103. See ibid., p.21, where he says: "الا ترى كيف نسبوا النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم الى الشعر لما غلبـــوا وتبين عجزهم ، فقالوا هو شاعـــــــر ؟"

104. Op.cit., p.33

105. Essay on Milton, edited by A.S. Collins, London, n.d., p.4.

106. Ibid., pp.5-6; Collins, the editor of his book, rejects it in the introduction, pp.xv-xvi; however, it was quoted by Barfield, op.cit., pp.47 and 69, for illustration.

107. P.160; compare with Ibn Rashīq, op.cit., p.20, where he says that prose came before poetry.

108. P.159.

109. Ibid., p.161.

110. Ibid., p.162.

111. The Triple Thinkers, p.36.

112. The Music of Poetry, Glasgow, 1942, p.26 et passim; for more by him on the recurrence of old forms, see "Reflections on Vers Libre", Selected Prose, London, 1953, p.91.

113. The Music of Poetry, pp.27-8.

114. The introduction to Anabasis, p.11.

115. The Music of Poetry, p.26.

116. New Directions in Prose and Poetry, London, No.14, 1953, in a section entitled "A Little Anthology of the Poem in Prose", pp. 330-408; above quotation from p.330. See also above p.934 n.

117. Beirut, 1960, p.13.

118. "Fī Qaṣīdāt al-Nathr", Shi'r magazine, No.14, Spring, 1960, p.82.

119. "'Audah ilā Qaṣīdat al-Nathr", Al-Nahār paper, Beirut, August 17th, 1960, p.4.

120. The Music of Poetry, p.16; al-Nuwaihi is particularly fascinated by this idea, see op.cit., pp.17-24 for his translation of most of this lecture; et passim for comments.

121. Loc.cit.

122. Under VERS LIBRE; see also P. Mansell Jones, The Background of Modern French Poetry, Cambridge, 1951, pp.93-150 where, in four chapters, he discusses the development of these forms.

123. Al-Rihlah al-Thāminah, pp.18-9; Mansell Jones, however, thinks it presents a contradiction in terms, op.cit., p.94.

124. Al-Hilāl, November, 1905, Vol.XIV,ii,97-8.

125. The influence of translations from foreign languages on the spread of these forms has been commented upon by many writers; see M. Badawi, Rasā'il, pp.9-10; Adūnīs, "Fī Qaṣīdat al-Nathr", Shi'r, op.cit., p.77; Unsi al-Ḥāj, Lann, p.11; Nāzik al-Malā'ikan, Qadāyā, pp.126-30, etc.

126. This has been discussed by Suzanne Bernard in her book Le Poème en Prose de Baudelaire jusqu'a nos Jours, Paris, 1959, pp.24-9 and 34-7.

127. In Adūnīs's article, op.cit., as well as in the introduction of U. al-Ḥāj in Lann, op.cit.

128. It is interesting to notice that "A Little Anthology of the Poem in Prose", by C. H. Ford, includes a Makki chapter from the Quran, in translation.

129. U. al-Ḥāj specifies that their conscious practice of this form began around 1958; op.cit., p.7.

130. Under Prose Poem.

131. From the introduction to Anabasis, loc.cit.

132. Quoted by Mansell Jones, op.cit., p.109. Adūnīs repeated this description in his article "'Audah ilā Qaṣīdat al-Nathr", but did not mention the source.

133. See al-Ḥāj, op.cit., pp.12 and 15; Adūnīs, Shi'r, op.cit., pp.81-2.

134. Ibid., p.82.

135. For his description of the structural qualities of qasīdat al-nathr, see his article in Al-Nahār, op.cit., as well as his article in Shi'r, op.cit., p.80.

136. Ibid.

137. Op.cit., p.11.

138. Ibid., p.15.

139. Ibid., pp.14-5.

140. Ibid., p.15.

141. Ibid., p.14.

142. "Fī Qaṣīdat al-Nathr", loc.cit.

143. See above, pp. 768-84.

144. See above, pp. 174-5 and 180-1 & 187-94.

145. See above, p. 123.

146. See above, pp. 192-3.

147. In the interview by P. Mansell Jones, op.cit., pp.170-1.

148. See above, pp. 727-9.

149. Adab wa Fann, p.45.

150. "Reflections on Vers Libre", p.83.

151. See for example Adūnīs's three diwans, Awrāq fi 'l-Rīḥ, Beirut, 1958, Aghāni Mihyār and Al-Tahawwulāt; see al-Khāl's Qasā'id fi 'l-Arba'īn.

152. Aside from the articles mentioned below and several others, Shi'r, in collaboration with Al-Nahār paper, gave a prize (jā'izat qasīdat al-nathr) to Muḥammad al-Māghūṭ (who, incidentally does not write qasīdāt al-nathr but shi'r manthūr), see Shi'r, No.17, Winter, 1961, p.171; a great insistence on the "poetic value" of this form persisted; see comments by Adūnīs, ibid., No.19, Summer, 1961, p.122, and by al-Ḥāj, ibid., No.20, Autumn, 1961, pp.131-2, etc.

153. Al-Baḥth 'an al-Judhūr, Beirut, 1960, p.72.

154. "Fī Jubb al-Usūd", Shi'r, No.15, Summer, 1960, p.105.

155. Ibid.

156. Loc. cit.

157. Leaves of Grass, New York, 1900, III, 56. See also above p.923 n.

158. Complete Prose Works, New York, 1902, "New Poetry", II, 272 ff.

159. Adūnīs translated a long poem by Saint John Perse in 1957 with a discussion of the poet's life, works and poetic attributes; see Shi'r magazine, No.4, Autumn, 1957, "Ḍaiyyiqatun Hia 'l-Marākib", pp.38-83. His first poem in prose appeared in ibid., No.7-8, Summer-Autumn, 1958, entitled "Waḥdahu 'l-Ya's", pp.10-23. However, the direct influence of Perse's poem above is seen in Adūnīs's prose poem "Arwād yā Amīrata 'l-Wahm", Shi'r, No.10, Spring, 1959, pp.7-16. The influence in choice of diction and imagery is seen

in all Adūnīs's later poetry; see his description of Perse's poetic attributes in his discussion of his poetry, op.cit., pp.85-6; see also Bernard, op.cit., pp.599-601 and 755-62 for the description of the poetry of Perse.

160. Quotation from Henri Peyre, Contemporary French Literature, New York, 1964, p.416.

161. Thalāthūn Qasīdah, poems Nos. 28, 4 and 2 respectively.

162. Ibid., his poems "Faustus 1954" and "Ilā Madam Aphrodite", respectively.

163. J.I. Jabrā, Tammūz fi 'l-Madīnah, the introduction, p.7.

164. Pattern and Variation, p.233.

165. Ibid., p.234.

166. Quoted by the Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics, under VERS LIBRE.

167. "Reflections on Vers libre", p.87.

168. Quoted by E.P.P., loc.cit.

169. Ibid.

170. New Directions, loc.cit.

171. See Qadāyā, pp.130-4 and 180-93.

172. Ibid., p.182.

173. Included in Al-Qasīdah Kāf, it was first published in Shi'r, No.16, Autumn, 1960, pp.9-19.

174. Aghāni Mihyār, pp.240-66.

175. PP.27-38.

176. See R. Buṭṭi, Sihr al-Shi'r, p.24.

177. Rasā'il, pp.9-10. See above pp.905-6.

178. Among other critics who believe in the necessity of metre for poetry are 'Izziddīn Ismā'īl, op.cit., pp.51-3; Ibrāhīm Anīs, op.cit., p.14 et seq; and Muḥammad Mandūr, Al-Ādāb, January, 1962, p.3, where he emphatically rejects al-shi'r al-manthūr.

179. Hiwār, No.19, November-December, 1965, p.76.

180. Ibid., p.80.

181. Ibid.

182. Ibid.

183. Ibid.

184. Ibid.

SECTION 2: TONE, ATTITUDES AND THEMES

The fifties open a completely new era in literature, and in social and political life. Previous eras had prepared the way for a poetry of greater courage and experimentation, for a period of harvest. Even without the great political upheavals of this epoch, poetry would have undergone a revolution in technique. The accumulated poetic experience and the acquired poetic education of the past decades would still have been there to effect it. However, the political upheavals which began with the Palestine disaster in 1948 and culminated in a series of military eruptions and active political and social experiments, gave greater strength to a revolutionary artistic spirit. This helped to effect deeper and bolder changes in poetry. Poetic tone and attitudes were among the elements whose change was directly determined by the political atmosphere of the Arab world.

By attitude is meant here the poet's standpoint and general outlook on life and man. Tone describes the manner in which he conveys his attitude. I.A. Richards described it as the reflection of the author's attitude towards his audience.[1] The Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics lists other terms used to denote the same concept as "impression", "spirit", "atmosphere", "aura", "accent", etc.[2] Attitudes and tone are very closely related, for "attitudes determine tone, and tone reflects attitudes". Both are closely connected with the general mood of the era. The E.P.P. has a further elaboration:

> Since poetry is regarded as a specialization of language for the communication of attitudes, the determination of the exact shading of tone in a particular poem is one of the most important duties of the explicator. The tone of a poem is also a source of value judgments; a poem is deemed poor if the attitudes it expresses are vague, confused, unsustained, unjustified, simple, conventional, or sentimental.

Had the political upheavals not taken place during this epoch, the poet's pre-occupation with tone would have been mainly centred on

bringing about a divorce from the oratorical tone of some of the neo-Classical poetry and its loud accent. His pre-occupation would have been to achieve an attitude of greater involvement with man in the vein of some modern Western poetry. But with the present era deeply involved in political and social experimentation, this motif took on a deeper gravity and responsibility, and tone underwent changes as diverse as the changes taking place in the psychology and spirit of the poets themselves.

An Era of Anxiety

The Palestine disaster announced the bankruptcy of Arab life and endeavour, yet writers on the subject before the mid-sixties, while pointing towards the military and political failures, did not seem to realise the utter impossibility of achieving a harmony between the old concepts of life and the new mental and spiritual plane which must be achieved if the Arab people were to arrive at strength and effectiveness. The traditional framework of life with its particular values and concepts was not rejected except in parts and a constant compromise was sought in analytical writings.[3]

However, the subconscious of the nation, in an undefined torrent of hate, shame and rejection, expressed its reaction in two ways. First, in a chain of revolutions and coup d'etats which shook the Arab world at intervals. Secondly by expressing its rejection in the creative writings of some avant-garde poets and story writers.

The general outlook of the avant-garde poetry of the period is serious. At its mildest, it is sad,[4] but in poems of greater intensity, it can be sombre, and often tragic. The words most used in avant-garde literature to describe the general attitude of the age are: anxiety (qalaq), alienation (ghurbah), rejection (rafḍ), disintegration (tamazzuq) and loss of identity, harmony or purpose (dayā'). "These are the banners of our age", says one writer.[5] And they are indeed valid when avant-garde contemporary poetry is examined, for much of this poetry revolves

around the problems of finding roots in this era, of changing the face of things, or simply of bemoaning the precarious destiny of the individual in the Arab world.

This aspect of the artistic expression reflected a state of alienation which caused the attitudes of rejection and rebellion, feelings of anxiety and disintegration, and even despair and terror. One writer described the general tone as a scream of terror "Īqā' al-Ru'b" permeating the poetry.[6] However, the authenticity of this aspect in the artistic expression has been questioned by some writers. Zaki Najīb Maḥmūd, a prominent Egyptian writer and Professor of philosophy, finds it strange that writers should talk of alienation and anxiety,[7] for the present-day Arabs do not share the same experience of Western man:

> Western man had come to experience a wide chasm between his conscious and unconscious. What he sees with his conscious mind is denied by what is buried in his unconscious. This has caused a great disintegration within him which has affected his literature... there is a strong feeling of alienation and disillusionment because /Western/ man has separated from his nature and lost balance... becoming therefore schizophrenic...[8]

We, the Arabs, he insists, have not experienced this dichotomy.[9] We are at the threshold of a scientific age and

> The literature of the conscious mind is nearer to our spiritual needs than that of the angry young men or the literature of anxiety of the Existentialists... Shining hope should therefore be more appropriate to our standpoint than despair...[10]

This implies that one of the most prominent phenomena in modern avant-garde Arabic poetry, that of rejection and rebellion, does not reflect a true standpoint. It also implies that there is nothing in Arab life which calls for unhappiness or rejection, that the artist has no valid reason for rebellion stemming from inner feelings of alienation. Writing in the early sixties, Zaki Najīb Maḥmūd overlooks the painful and dynamic effects of the Palestine catastrophe on the Arab individual, the feelings of shame, fear, hatred, and resentment, the whole political, and

psychological chaos of the disaster. But as the Lebanese Sociologist Nadīm al-Bīṭār explains:

> A great national catastrophe means that everything around us has betrayed us... It uncovers to us the fact that all the systems, beliefs and values that surround us did not represent an authentic truth... but were false.[11]

He goes on to say that when the catastrophe struck, it uncovered an already existing disintegration in the "unity of the traditional existence".[12] To Bīṭār, the Palestine catastrophe has a revolutionary dynamism which follows a special dialectic and does not stop before it effects a great psychological and ideological change.[13] But this psychological change, Dr. Bīṭār asserts, "takes place slowly and unobtrusively".[14] This is what seems to have happened after the 1948 debacle. And until the actual failure of the old system of values was demonstrated and analysed, first by Bīṭār himself in the mid-sixties,[15] and then, after 1967, by others following him, the subconscious of the nation, especially of the more sensitive individuals, was in actual turmoil. In 1958 a Palestinian writer, J.I. Jabrā, described the situation in similar fashion, clearly linking the feelings of frustration and sterility with the consequences of the Palestine disaster:

> Ten years since we were afflicted with the /loss of/ Palestine... a great, enormously violent experience... Death? Destitution? Hunger? We knew them all... But the scream of woe gave way eventually to a scream of anger, and the general falsehood which had afflicted a whole nation was finally exposed... We started... to uncover ourselves and the first promptings of anger discovered the sterility in us.[16]

Ten years later, another Palestinian writer described the general picture:

> For many years I have been wondering whether the attitude of rejection of the traditional Arab existence did not after all stem from authentic causes. It was often attacked not only by conventionalists but also by many "revolutionaries" as being destructive, or at least defeatist.
>
> For many years many of us have been wondering what was wrong with our national life. The spirit of the last decade was, if you listened to broadcasts and read the dailies, quite optimistic. There was in fact a great deal of progress going on... But there was a

> general neurosis which poets, creative writers and artists felt deeply and which they invariably reflected in their works. I am speaking here of the more highly regarded ones among them. ...Their rejection of what a sociologist might call a limited phase of revolution was greatly intuitive and often expressed in ambiguity. This rejection sometimes found its way into intellectual analysis but this group were at their best when they kept to an artistic expression. The most amazing thing about this group was the similarity they had with each other, no matter from what Arab country they came. The subconscious of the whole nation, whose hidden impulse they expressed, hoarded the same kind of unhappiness, the same kind of fear.[17]

The period between 1943-1967 may be described as a period of constant search for new values and for a solution, but a search not backed by any really clear or functional system of thought. Looking to sociological sources for further enlightenment, one may say that many sensitive individuals found themselves suffering from what Ḥ. Barakāt, referring to Durkheim's definition of the subject, called anomie or normlessness,[18] which he described as a breakdown in the "system of norms, values and symbols".[19] * In normlessness we immediately have one of the first causes of alienation.[20]

Z.N. Maḥmūd mentions 'freedom' as one of the three catchwords most used in contemporary Arabic writing (the other two are 'modern' and 'new').[21] Yet he does not discuss the problem of freedom in the Arab world, the way in which the individual's destiny, his very Will, are constantly and sometimes ruthlessly, controlled by others (the family, traditions, religious beliefs and above all, the State, with all its

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* Barakāt is speaking here mainly of the West, but although aspects of normlessness in the West are different, it does not change the fact that a large section of the educated Arabs have suffered a dislocation of values in varying degrees of intensity, which left many of them in a state of normlessness or quasi normlessness.

strong machinery of control by police, spies,* and, in some countries, by extra-constitutional methods).[22] The powerlessness of the individual vis-a-vis these forces, often tyrannical in their control, is surely cause enough for acute feelings of anxiety, fear and restlessness, and we have here another cause for alienation.[25] It is important to point out here that the Arab man's powerlessness, judged generally, seems to be limited to his powerlessness in the face of the outer world. With only a few exceptions, the Existentialist experience of man's powerlessness "in the face of himself"[26] is not yet authentically dominant in Arabic creative writing. His real hazards are not the Existentialist exercise of the Will and the compulsion to choose in the face of unlimited possibilities,** but the effacement of individual Will in the face of other forces outside himself. However, when the clash between individual Will and the outer world is internalized as a mode of personal experience in and against the outer world, and when the individual suffers through this clash a personal agony that rips his very heart, then he might express himself in Existentialist manner. Current Arab avant-garde poetry boasts of a few examples such as that of Khalīl Ḥāwi which have dominant Existentialist motifs.

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* The police-spy and the police-state have not been left unattacked by the contemporary poet; for a single example of each Adūnīs convicts the whole age as a police-age: "آه يا عصر الحذاء الذهبي"[23] and al-Sayyāb satirizes the informer:

النور في شباك داري زجاج
كم حدقت بي خلفه من عيون
سوداء كالخنجر
يجرحن بالاهداب اسراري [24]

** Arland Ussher in his book on the attitude of dread in Kierkegaard, Heidigger and Sartre says on this, "The individual today has come to 'years of Indiscretion', and been given his latchkey; but he is frightened, and only too anxious to surrender it again. He finds himself 'thrown' into an unfriendly world, and confronted with a Demon - his own free Will. Its symbol is the discovery of the machine-power, which has made us, to our dismay, 'as gods'. We lost all our Edens..."[28]

The Arab individual is confronted with a great discrepancy between the higher objectives which his knowledge and national ambition put forward and the facts of his life. Out of the corruption and ignorance of 1948, the nation was promised redemption by revolution, but the revolutions failed to bring about a truly redeeming change, and this resulted in a sense of alienation which was a consequence of the "encounter between utopia and reality".[27]

Feelings of discontent, anxiety, emptiness, disgust, despair, anger, resentment and uprootedness are aptly described by Barakāt to be among the manifestations of alienation, and to be "nowhere described as vividly as in literature and expressive arts",[29] an idea already put forward above.[30]

These attitudes, however, although having a true basis in the predicament of contemporary Arab life, have arrived to the Arab creative writer as already crystalized and mature literary attitudes through his readings in contemporary Western literature, especially Sartre, Camus and Colin Wilson's The Outsider, which was translated into Arabic soon after its appearance in English in 1956.* Avant-garde Arab poets, for example, were fascinated by Sartre's notion of man's responsibility and aloneness in the carrying of his burden, and of his disgust at the shackles of his

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* By Anīs Zaki Ḥasan; it was entitled Al-Lāmuntami, an original name at the time. Izziddīn Ismā'īl also noted that these attitudes have been introduced through translations from Existentialist Western Literature, but he rightly claimed that the very fact that they exerted an immediate influence was significant. Nizār Qabbāni, however, rejected the Existentialist attitudes of nausea, the Void and the Absurd, regarding them as completely French, probably prompted to this not only by a nature normally more integrated with social norms than most, but also by examples of extreme metaphysical attitudes adopted by some minor authors. Iḥsān 'Abbās warned against artificiality in the adoption of these attitudes which he said were detectable especially in poetry, noticing at the same time that the Lebanese and Syrians have shown a greater leaning towards the adoption of these attitudes than others, and referring this to the many translations of Sartre and Camus in these two countries. However, since books translated in Lebanon are available everywhere, the reason might rather lie in the fact that there is a longer tradition of more sophisticated French influence in these two countries than elsewhere in the Arab world.[31]

freedom.[32] In some experiments a heroic drive existed, probably greatly influenced by Sartre's incessant announcement of the individual's moral duty to be committed to the external cause and to the fulfilment of his commitment regardless of consequences and without a concrete hope of ultimate success,[33] an attitude described by Henry Peyre as "the anguish of Existentialists and their desperate heroism".[34] The poet felt that it was not only his moral duty but also his inevitable destiny to be the hero of the written word,

35 انه لغة تتموج بين الصواري
انه فارس الكلمات الغريبة

The 'word' was glorified beyond description in the following:

36 يا محرق الشوك الشائك في
بالكلمة الحرب

And described as a message of love and redemption,[37] for which the poet is persecuted and crucified:

33 أدمى وكفاي على الافق
أصلب

Several types of rejection are expressed in contemporary Arabic poetry and these vary in both intensity and nature. Metaphysical rejection stemming from man's universal condition (his 'existential dichotomy' as Erich Fromm calls it),[39] is detectable in some experiments (man's aloneness in the face of his destiny as a mortal and a unique human being, his need to alleviate this aloneness, his tragic realisation of his inevitable death, his search for a meaning to his life).[40] However, it does not yet constitute an outstanding experience or a main theme around which the poetry revolved. The many aspects of this kind of rejection would require a lengthy study in cultural patterns before one could determine with authority the originality and authenticity of the examples given. Cultural attitudes, the persistence of inherited points of view, the acquiescence to or rejection (conscious and

unconscious) of religious norms, the strength and nature of human relations in any given culture, should be examined carefully and the aid of informed opinion sought. One might suggest here that the metaphysical attitudes of individuals are closely connected with the points of view and the artistic expression of the culture with which they have the maximum affinity,* for this basic affinity seems to come to the foreground in moments of highly personal experience. Thus Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, facing certain death, gave up his revolt and abandoned himself to a despairing pre-occupation with death and suffering. Whether this abandon stems from existentialist experience, or from Islamic submission to fate is difficult to ascertain at times, although at others an Islamic abandon is certain:

لانه منك حلو عندي المرض [42]
حاشا ، فلست على ما شئت اعتـــرض

The agonies of Job are enacted again with all the Prophet's deep faith and submission to God's will: " لك الحمد مهما استطال البلاء ",[43] but a suffocated scream of terror permeates the four volumes which constitute the poetry al-Sayyāb wrote after the fatal disease struck him in 1961.** It is definitely a unique and tortuous experience to read these volumes, for the poet's voice screaming in the face of infinity can never be forgotten. His death shudder is infectious. The picture of the grave waiting for the poet, of the dead (his beloved mother, deceased since his childhood, amongst them) calling for him, horrifyingly summarizes man's existence and his ultimate fate, but also reminds us of Arab folklore which relates death and the dying with the dead who had previously loved them:

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* E. Fromm, for example, discussing human relations in a social context says, "In any given culture, love relationships are only a more intense existential need to alleviate his aloneness.

** Al-Ma'bad al-Gharīq, Manzil al-Aqnān, Shanāshīl Ibnat al-Jalabi, and his posthumous volume, Iqbāl.

** Al-Ma'bad al-Gharīq, Manzil al-Aqnān, Shanāshīl Ibnat al-Jalabi, and his posthumous volume, Iqbāl.

44 وتدعو من القبر امي ، "بنيّ احتضنّي فبرد الردى في عروقي
قد نفى عظامي بما قد كسوت ذراعيك والصدر واحم الجراح "

In fact, this poetry knows the two opposing poles of utter rejection of life and the positive and feverish search to find a meaning for a life lived only to be pitifully and quickly spent. While there is absolute nihilism when he says:

45 ولست براغب حتى بخط اسمي على الماء

he finds a positive and redeeming attitude to his life in his creative energy as it asserts itself in his poetry with which he thinks he could conquer death:

46 بالشعر ، بالسبرق ، بالجلجل الندوى
رميت وجه الموت يهوى نحسوى

However the general handling of his material in these poems, with very few exceptions, tends to be very simple, as if his acquired sophistication of theme and handling had abandoned him.* In some of his poignantly experienced moments, he is the son of a simpler basic culture. Travelling to Beirut, London and Paris in search of a cure, he is again, not the adventurous Sandabad or Ulysses, as he liked to believe,[47] but rather the old Arab lost at sea. Rent with nostalgia for country and family, his desolate loneliness does not evoke in his many new poems any meditative thought either on his own condition or on that of mankind in general. There remains only these intensely agonised emotions of nostalgia, fear, despair, suffering, self-pity, and compassion for his children.[48]

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* However, the constant presence of death bred in al-Sayyāb a heightened sexuality at times, as if desire to him at that moment was another great assertion of life, defeating in its intensity the debility of his exhausted body and embodying a need for fusion that might re-enforce in him the lingering reality of life:

49 يميل علي كيف أشاء ، اعصره كما اهوى
ولا يقوى
على رفضي ، على تهديم عرش من لظى وار
اتوج فوقه الآمال راضية القوى شهوى

However, aloneness, the inevitability of death and the burden of old age are causes of anxiety and anger in the work of the Iraqi Buland al-Ḥaidari. Thus when he expresses his aloneness in images describing the blind fate of mortals and the vulnerability of life his tone is angry and sulky:

سئمت وجهك نفسي • اتركيني
.....
لي مرسى وممر في دروب الشمس امسي
.....
انا للناس وللنسر الذي ينهش صدري
انا موتي

Man's aloneness in the crowd as depicted by the Egyptian poet Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Muʿṭi Ḥijāzi discovers a poetic sensibility of depth and charm, and (using a phrase from Erich Fromm) shows a consciousness of the "fundamental aloneness and solitude [of man] in a universe indifferent to his fate".[51] It appears on several occasions and can be summed up in the sentence with which he ends one of his poems, "هذا الزحام .... لا احد".[52]

In the work of the Syrian poet, Adūnīs, there is originality and complexity, and much of it is mystical and often metaphysical. He has been developing more and more in this direction. His rejection of the social and political framework of life and his hope of national revival are becoming more and more welded into the other universal and timeless problems of existence. The poet's experience, at its best, becomes a mirror of man's eternal suffering and hope and his eternal quest for truth, seen against the background of the contemporary Arab's experience of a world at a dividing point in history. It is impossible to go into his complex experiment here, but it is relevant to point out that his emotional apprehension of thought, (to use a phrase from Herbert Read),[53] is expressed directly in an imagery and a symbolism sometimes of a high quality. He does not always achieve the synthetic order necessary, in a good metaphysical poem, to obtain harmony between the elements which constitute it,[54] but he probably does not aim at it in obedience to a basic rejection that has no intention of arriving at harmony.[55]

The Palestinian prose poet, Tawfīq Ṣāyigh was able, earlier than any other contemporary poet, to achieve this fusion of experience between the temporal and the universal. The exile of the Palestinian is, in his poetry, also an exile from the Kingdom of Heaven, from love, from the established literary world, i.e. from all the sources of experience that give roots, security and assurance. He is capable of a polarity of approach.[56]

It would be impossible, for lack of space, to go into more details of metaphysical rejection in avant-garde contemporary poetry, but other experiments do exist, some of which are very interesting.

However, the main theme of rejection in contemporary Arabic poetry is directed towards a denial of the external social and political world.* The poet's pre-occupation seems to lie more with the problems of life than of death, of this world rather than of the other. For the daily menace besieging the individual's life presents the greater immediate danger. The presence of death (whether it is actual death or a death in life) embodies to this poet, less a metaphysical than a moral problem. It is a kind of death that is inflicted usually by others (war or other forms of aggression). It can be conquered by struggle and action.

Almost all avant-garde poets have chosen exile, at least at some period in their careers.** Always a spiritual attitude, this exile was

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* Social rejection and political anger are not new in modern Arabic poetry. The social rejection of poets like al-Shābbi and al-Ṭal, and the political anger of poets like Ṭūqān and al-Jawāhiri give a solid foundation to the present form of externalized rejection, although none of the contemporary poets has arrived at the kind of irony found in al-Ṭal and Ṭūqān. This does not mean that these were the only poets who protested against social and political ills, but most other poets of their period, and many poets now, direct their rejection towards generally accepted social and political objects of hate such as Imperialism and Zionism.[57]

** The martyrdom of self-exile is not new in modern Arabic poetry, for there is a tradition of self-exile among Iraqi poets in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (ʿAbd al-Ghaffār al-Akhras, ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Jamīl in the nineteenth century, and al-Kāẓimi in the twentieth, to name a few).[58]

in some cases also physical, inflicted on the poet by actual persecution or at least by the fear of persecution.

Much of the rejection of poets started as the vague gestures of individuals who felt the treacherous and futile elements in political and social life and, intuitively, rejected them. Most poets have written at least some poetry in this vein:

59 فبيتنا لا يعرف الفرح
. . . . . .
ولا يزال ليله وشاحه الردى
ورحبة الاشباح لا تزال
ولا يزال ساحه ملاعب العدى

This is seen by poets to be the plight of a whole generation "جيلي في الغاب فريسة"[60] who have sown the seeds but found that they could not reap the fruits "وعلمنا اننا كنا البذار",[61] a generation that dream in vain of a day when peace and happiness can be established:

62 احلم يا مدينتي
. . . . . .
بأن اسيرذات يوم قادم
تحت نهار يسعد الانسان

When a reaction finds its ultimate satisfaction in a self-exile that is content with bemoaning the lot of the individual and the nation, it can be termed passive, because it sometimes involves a great deal of despair. But the attitude of giving and self-sacrifice in the poetry of Khalīl Ḥāwi, al-Sayyāb and others,* is definitely positive:

63 اود لو غرقت في دمي الى القرار
لاحمل الحب مع البشر

In these experiments the self-sacrifice stems from a great love that transcends the fact that there will be no recompense. To the voice that warns him that

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* This attitude is not to be confused with that of the poet-martyr, poet-fighter. These poets are speaking here as individuals fighting an ordinary person's fight.

64 "سوف يمضون وتبقى "
"فارغ الكفين ، مصلوبا ، وحيد "

Khalīl Ḥāwi answers:

65 يعبرون الجسر في الصبح خفافا
اضلعي امتدت لهم جسرا وطيد

This attitude combines many emotions and uses several methods of expression. Based on love, it recognises and hates the evils that hinder life without losing touch with the basic issue, which is the necessity of securing and protecting a more just life. It recognises that struggle is necessary and inevitable. It turns itself from merely rejecting evil to actually destroying it: *

67 رفضنا حب وايمان خصيب
حبنا يحرق شوك العار والحقد ...

The development of the tone of rejection in individual poets would furnish an interesting basis for a specialised study. It will be found to reflect both the events in a poet's own life and events in the Arab world. But changes in attitude are highly psychological and should be handled with the utmost care.

A poet's attitude of rejection can depend greatly on his political affinities, if any. Socialist poets like ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyāti usually end their poems with a note of confidence in the struggle of man and his ultimate victory, within a Socialist framework. This can be irksome because it does not allow for the usual change of mood in an author and might lead to artificiality in weaker poets. The Tammūz poets,**

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* Khālidah Saʿīd is wrong when she regards the poet's declaration of bearing the burden with love as passive, for it is no submission to evil and death, as she would have us believe, but is an acceptance of responsibility and of a burden borne because leaving it would mean the very debasing of life.[66]

** Most prominent among them were Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb, Khalīl Ḥāwi, Adūnīs, Yūsuf al-Khāl, and the prose poet Jabrā I. Jabrā.

who resort to the use of the Adonis myth, usually show a positive kind of rejection because of the inherent faith in rebirth and resurrection imbued in the myth itself. The poets of this group, however, have very few things in common either in their handling of material or in their basic attitudes of rejection. As will be discussed shortly, they do not form a school of poetry, and after the end of the fifties, their basic Tammūzian affinity seems to dwindle.

Is the commitment to a particular ideology needed to achieve a real revolutionary standpoint as some writers claim?[68] While one feels that the commitment to a revolutionary ideology is legitimate for a poet who finds fulfilment in this, one does not feel that only such a commitment secures a revolutionary standpoint. The poet in revolt transcends the given limits of a revolution when he is prompted by his intuition and perception to do so. The Socialist poet, al-Bayyāti, asserts the right of the committed poet to rebel against the revolution to which he is committed.[69] What is important to realise is that the poet, although he experiences both political enthusiasm and political hatred, should at the same time be able to transcend politics and be ahead of it.

Certain poets resort to a variety of ways of expressing their rebellion. The employment of myths and material from folklore intensifies the effects of the poet's experience, if properly handled. [illegible] سيزيف القى عنه "[70] اقسمت ان اعيش مع سيزيف or throwing it away: "[illegible]ces عب الدهور"),[71] and Sandabād in his constant roving in exile ("ولم ستعدت اليكم"[72] ازل امضي وامضي خلفه in search of truth and re-birth ("شاعرا في فمه بشارة"[73] etc.

ولم
عدت اليكم"[illegible] ازل امضي وامضي خلفه in search of truth and re-birth ("
شاعرا في فمه بشارة"[73] etc.

The attitudes expressed in most of the numerous diwans published every year tend to be simpler and more directly expressed, reflecting the still prevailing simplicity of outlook and expression of the majority.

It has been said above that the prevailing tone in contemporary Arabic poetry is serious, sometimes tragic, sometimes angry. These are legitimate feelings today, provided poets do not allow their poetry to become hysterical. For indeed numerous virulent hate poems besmirch the contemporary magazines.

Among individual poets Adūnīs, Ḥāwi and Buland al-Ḥaidari keep a sustained gravity, their poetry lacking any redeeming sense of humour. Al-Sayyāb has a greater variety of attitudes:[74] personal joys and griefs, and communal hope, faith, anger and tragedy. His tone alternates between confidence, despair, irony, compassion, apology, yearning, and sometimes a devastating self-pity. Among Arab poets he is the writer who has composed the greatest number of elegies on himself. A versatility of attitudes and tone is found in the poetry of avant-garde women poets whose involvement has often been accomplished on two spheres, the personal and the communal. Fadwā Ṭūqān's candour is an achievement for the line of truth in poetry. She has been able to transfer into verse the varied tones of a woman in love: playful, "تغار ، احب احب تغـــار",[75] coquetish, " انا انثى فاغتفر للقلب زهـــــوه ",[76] contented, "شربنا الشذى منه حتى ارتوينا",[77] full of ecstacy, " احيا في كون مســـــحور ",[78] and mischievous.[79] Nāzik al-Malā'ikah's poetry vascillates between agony and ecstacy, anger and a rather philosophical matter of fact tone, in a fascinating manner.[80] Among Men M. Badawi achieves a variety of tone and a capacity of control which results in subtlity and a sustained urbanity. Tenderness, irony, wistfulness and a kind of emotional intellectualism that lends poignancy to his meditations, are among his achievements in this respect.[81] A heart-catching tenderness of tone is found in some of Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr's poetry (although it can be deliberately oratorical).[82] In fact the element of tone is 'Abd al-Ṣabūr's foremost poetic attribute, but unfortunately marred by a certain nonchalance in his style. Aḥmad 'Abd al-Mu'ṭi Ḥijāzi is also capable of great tenderness: a wistful atmosphere

hovers about his poems. Despite a sustained urgency and high pitch in al-Bayyāti's poetry, there is redeeming optimism and confidence.

A Short Note on Theme in Avant-Garde Poetry:

Theme in poetry must surely harmonize with the variety of attitudes prevailing at a given time. The main themes in avant-garde poetry therefore centre around the problems of the nation and of the individual as a conscious member of the community. Several observations may be made here:

1. The subject matter revolves around man and the human condition. There was a conscious, sometimes a fanatic, retreat from the aesthetic veneration of the Symbolists, from the description of nature for the sake of description,[33] from Romantic introversion and self-indulgence. One of the greatest achievements of this poetry is the merging of the personal with the communal experience, so that the expression of man's plight in the Arab world is delineated through the poet's awareness of his own plight and unhappiness.

2. The subject matter is treated in a more oblique fashion. The obliquities in this poetry will be examined later in this chapter.

3. A line of truth is achieved in this poetry. Avant-garde poets, on the whole, wrote as a result of true experience, not to curry favour with either the authorities or the public. This is no small achievement, for the demands on the creative writer in this period were tremendous. Political changes, whenever they took place, needed the support of public opinion. The authorities felt the need for someone who could assure the public, creatively and emotionally, of their role as destiny makers. The public which needed to be re-assured, leaned heavily on the traditional speaker of the Arabs, the poet. Thus the many poetry festivals since the late fifties, and the numerous poetry gatherings all over the Arab world.

Yet avant-garde poets rarely wrote for occasions.*

4. The political theme in most avant-garde poetry was translated from the level of the event to the level of a general (but also highly personal) experience. Aside from the actual event of the Palestine disaster of 1948, two great events seemed to inflame the imagination: the union of Syria and Egypt of 1958 and the Algerian war of liberation, especially the latter.[85]

5. Other themes varied widely. Love poetry was quickly taking on a new approach with the change of individual consciousness. This theme reflects more than any other the cultural attitudes of people. Changes of attitudes to love shown by both men and women poets in this period deserve a long study. On the whole, avant-garde poets did not seem particularly obsessed with problems of love. Exceptions are such poets as Tawfīq Ṣāyigh who shows a complex attitude towards a problematic love theme, and Fadwā Ṭūqān whose basic life involvement seemed, until recently,** to be centred mainly on her personal love relations. Nizār Qabbāni's attitude often reflected a rather conventional outlook towards woman and love. He began his career as a poet who sang the praises of playful, coquetish women.[37] However, a change gradually took hold on him, especially after the 1967 war. Nizār Qabbāni now is one of the strongest poetic voices of the Palestine resistence movement.

6. The Christian tradition in modern Arabic literature found confirmation in the work of such poets as Tawfīq Ṣāyigh and Yūsuf al-Khāl.

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* Such as Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Muʿṭi Ḥijāzi and Ṣalaḥ ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr, on rare occasions. A poem by ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr delivered at the festival in memory of the Classical poet Abū Tammām, is a courageous challenge to the rhetoric and loudness of platform poetry. It uses very simple, nearly conversational language, and a deliberately subdued tone, but is illuminated by sudden flashes of poetic revelation.[34]

** Fadwā Ṭūqān showed a spontaneous and deep involvement with the tragedy of war in Palestine as a result of the 1967 June war.[36]

Their religious attitudes stem from basically Christian points of view, and themes based on conflict and dualisms are portrayed.[38]

7. However, one has to remember that it is not the subject matter in poetry that really matters, but rather the poet's attitude to it, the emotional veracity he maintains, the modern sensibility he achieves.

8. Generally speaking, one can say that the new poetry provides a social and psychological commentary on events which delineates the development of the national consciousness through these years of tumultious strain and stress.

9. Finally, a most important development is the adoption of archetypal patterns: differenciated by the E.P.P. as subjects, themes, situations, characters and images. In modern Arabic poetry, these various patterns exist, too: subjects (freedom, rebirth, national redemption); themes (the awakening of the Arab people, the necessity for sacrifice to secure a nobler life, the inevitability of suffering and the sustained fortitude of the individual against so many odds, the indictment of inner corruption and debility); situations (the alienation of the poet in a society controlled by force and even tyranny, the awe or revulsion felt by some poets towards the City, the yearning towards the Village); characters (the soothsayer, the hero, the tyrant, the traitor, the sufferer, the stooge, the hypocrite; one can perhaps even put here the jailor and the spy); and images (the wind, the sea, the wall, the grave, the birds, the snake). The adoption of archetypal patterns will be discussed in the section on myth.

Avant-garde Poetry and the Palestine Disaster:

The Palestine disaster of 1948 which unleashed so many social and political events was thought a subject most fit for poetry. The general opinion was that poetry did not rise to the level of the event.[39] This judgment stemmed from the erroneous opinion that such poetry "shi'r

al-nakbah" as they called it, must needs speak directly. Thus although there had been quite a number of experimental poems written directly on the disaster,[90] most avant-garde poems reflected it in oblique terms which eluded these critics.* In fact, the avant-garde poetry of this period is, generally speaking, a poetry tightly linked with the aftermath of the Palestine debacle.

The astounding thing is not that poets were not writing enough about a certain theme, but that they were writing and experimenting at all. For although, artistically speaking, the period was ripe for changes, the poets were living in so many currents of ideas that there was little balance. As Edmund Wilson says:

> Highly developed forms of literature require leisure and a certain amount of stability; and during a period of revolution the writer is usually deprived of both.[94]

It is only recently that the work of Palestinian Arab poets living in Israel since 1948 has become widely known in the Arab world. In many of its aspects, such as diction, imagery and form it must be regarded as a part of modern Arabic poetry.[95] Most of its themes revolve around the plight of occupation. However, its adventure is in the realm of tone

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* Two books came out on "shi'r al-nakbah", which show this general attitude. The first is Ṣāliḥ al-Ashtar's book, Fī Shi'r al-Nakbah, (Damascus, 1960), and the second is Kāmil al-Sawāfīri's painstaking work, Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth fī Ma'sāt Filasṭīn, 1917-1955 (Cairo, 1963).

Al-Ashtar limited himself to the discussion of poems which spoke directly and blatantly on the problem. His discussion tends to accumulate material unselectively. Since he seems hesitant about the value of the new poetry,[91] avant-garde examples are very few in his book. Thus the deeper impact of the Palestine disaster as represented in avant-garde poetry eluded him. Al-Sawāfīri's book has more or less the same defect, but it is a more studious attempt to register a long history of a struggle and of the poetry that accompanied it directly. He is limited by the date he set for his study. Because he examines indiscriminately all the verse written directly on the Palestine problem during this period, his conclusion was that the "traditional trend dominates most of this poetry" and characterizes the poetry of most Palestinian poets.[92] It is rather interesting to note that among the poets he regards as innovators are many who would be counted among the semi-traditional poets by avant-garde critics. Among these are Khālid al-Shawwāf, Sulaimān al-'Īsā, Abū Salmā ('Abd al-Karīm al-Karmi), Maḥmūd Ḥasan Ismā'īl and several others.[93]

and attitude. This is not the poetry of alienated individuals, as one would expect, but of a defiant, courageous people who have faith and resolution: " صنا على صدوركم باقون كالجـــراد "[96] says Tawfīq Zayyād, and Samīḥ al-Qāsim exclaims, " والبي آخر نبض من عروقي بأتسـام ",[97] and Maḥmūd Darwīsh assures us:

93 لم نكن تبلى حزيران كأفراخ الحمـــــام
ولذا ، لم يتفتت حبنا بين السلاسل
نحن يا انتباه من عشرين عـــام
نحن لا نكتب اشعارا
ولكنـا نقاتـــل

Attitudes of defiance are not really alien to the poetry of the rest of the Arab world. Faith and confidence have always been an important aspect of al-Bayyāti's experiment, as well as that of other Socialist poets. The tone of defiance is heard strongly in the poetry of the Palestinian Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb and Kamāl Nāṣir,[99] and many sporadic contributions. Recently it has been equally sustained in the poems of Nizār Qabbāni[100] when he writes about national problems. Nevertheless, the sustained mixture of faith and uncompromising challenge in the works of Arab poets living in Israel seems to stem more from their peculiar circumstances as individuals confronted by an external, alien enemy surrounding them and not from a commitment to a party as in the case of al-Khaṭīb and Nāṣir, or from a spontaneous reaction , as in the case of Qabbāni. This also shows that alienation in the Arab world stems more from internal causes, the individual feeling powerless against an enemy springing from the very heart of the nation.[101]

Footnotes

1. Practical Criticism, London, 1929, p.206.
2. Under TONE.
3. See the critiçism of Nadīm al-Bīṭār of Arab political thought in this aspect, Al-Fa āliyyah al-Thauriyyah fi 'l-Nakbah, Beirut, 1965, pp.5, 106 and 145-54 et passim; see also his interpretation of the disintegration of the traditional existence, ibid., pp.110-3.
4. Sadness as a phenomenon in contemporary Arabic poetry has been well discussed by I. Ismā'īl, "Ẓāhirat al-Ḥuzn fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āṣir", Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āṣir, pp.350-72.
5. Khālidah Sa'īd, "Bawādir al-Rafḍ fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth", Shi'r quarterly, No.16, Autumn, 1960, p.88.
6. Muṭā' Ṣafadi, "Al-Shi'r al-Unthawi wa Dīwān al-'Audah min al-Nab' al-Ḥālim", Al-Ādāb, February, 1960, pp.15 and 16.
7. Falsafah wa Fann, p.257.
8. Ibid., p.256; compare this with J.B. Priestley, Literature and the Western Man, London, 1962, p.356, where the statements of Maḥmūd coincide with those of Priestley. Maḥmūd, in fact, mentions Priestley with admiration, op.cit., pp.239-40.
9. Ibid., p.257.
10. Ibid., p.259.
11. Op.cit., p.48; for the last statement he quotes Ortega Y Gasset.
12. Ibid., p.107.
13. Ibid., p.66.
14. Ibid.
15. His first book, Al-Idyūlūjiyyah 'l-Inqilābiyyah, appeared in 1964. After 1967 he published two books already, Min al-Nuksah ila 'l-Thaurah, in 1968 and Min al-Ḥaqīqah il-Insāniyyah ila 'l-Ḥaqīqah 'l-Inqilābiyyah, in 1969; all his books were published at Beirut.
16. "Al-Mafāzah wa 'l-Bi'r wa 'l-Lāh", Al-Ḥurriyyah wa 'l-Ṭūfān, p.30.
17. The present writer, "The Revolutionary Ideology", Middle East Forum, Beirut, 1967, Vol.XLIII, No.4, 69-70.
18. "Alienation: a process of encounter between utopia and reality", an offprint from The British Journal of Sociology, March, 1969, Vol.XX, No.1, 2.
19. Ibid., p.5.
20. Ibid., pp.1-2 & 5.
21. Op.cit., pp.250-1.
22. See what Khālidah Sa'īd says on this, op.cit., p.90.
23. From his poem, "Al-'Aṣr al-Dhahabi", Aghāni Mihyār al-Dimashqi, p.147.
24. From his poem, "Risālah min Maqbarah", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.79.
25. See Barakāt, op.cit., p.4.
26. See ibid., p.2.
27. Ibid., the title; see also pp.6-7.

28. Journey Through Dread, London, 1955, p.15. On Freedom and responsibility and the feelings of anguish, abandonment and despair resulting from the co-existence of the two, see J.P. Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism, trans. Philip Mairet, London, 1948, especially pp.27-39; see also Ussher, op.cit., for an interpretation of Sartre's ideas and a criticism of them, pp.123-46. On mechanisms of escape from freedom see Erich Fromm, The Fear of Freedom, a Routledge edition, London, 1960, especially pp.117-78; these, however, describe the modern Western scene.

29. Op.cit., p.7.

30. On pp.051-2 above.

31. For Ismā'īl's comment, see op.cit., p.356; for Qabbāni's comment, see his essay, "Ma'rakat al-Yamīn wa 'l-Yasār fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi", Al-Ma'rifah, magazine, Damascus, March, 1962, I, i, 99; for 'Abbās's comment, see his essay, "Al-Ittijāhāt al-Falsafiyyah fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āṣir", Al-Ādāb, March, 1962, pp.11-2.

32. For a summary of Sartre's concept of this see Henri Peyre, "Existentialism: a Literature of Despair?", pp.21-32; see also Robert Cumming, "The Literature of Extreme Situations", Aesthetics Today, ed. Morris Philipson, New York, 1961, pp.377-412.

33. See Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism, p.39 et seq.

34. "Existentialism: a Literature of Despair?", p.28.

35. Adūnīs, "Al-'Ahd al-Jadīd", Aghāni Mihyār al-Dimshqi, p.27.

36. Khalīl al-Khouri, Ṣalawāt li 'l-Rīḥ, Beirut, 1963, p.153.

37. See Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr, "Aqūlu Lakum", from his volume of the same name, second edition, Beirut, 1965, pp.75-80.

38. Yūsuf al-Khāl, "Al-Shā'ir", Al-Bi'r al-Mahjūrah, p.11; the attitude of heroic chivalry in contemporary Arabic poetry was discussed by I. Ismā'īl, op.cit., pp.407-10.

39. Man for himself, New York, 1965, p.48.

40. See Fromm's chapter, "Human Nature and Character", ibid., pp.47-122 for a discussion of these problems.

41. Ibid., p.82.

42. From his poem, "Sifr Ayyūb", Manzil al-Aqnān, Beirut, 1963, p.53.

43. Ibid., p.36.

44. From his poem, "Nidā' 'l-Qalb", ibid., p.16.

45. From his poem, "Al-Mi'wal al-Ḥajari", Iqbāl, Beirut, 1965, p.42.

46. From his poem "Sifr Ayyūb", p.76.

47. For his likening himself to Sandabād, see his touching poem, "Raḥala 'l-Nahār", ibid., pp.5-11; for his likening himself to Ulysses, see his poem "Al-Waṣiyyah", Al-Ma'bad al-Gharīq, Beirut, 1962, p.155; many other examples of these can easily be found in his poetry.

48. His three diwans Al-Ma'bad al-Gharīq, Manzil al-Aqnān and Shanāshīl Ibnat al-Jalabi, abound with examples of nostalgia, and longing for his family.

49. From his poem, "Sifr Ayyūb", pp.63-4. Fromm maintains that "there is hardly any intense emotion which cannot be attracted to and blended with the sexual instinct", The Heart of Man, London, 1965, p.46.

50. From his poem, "Waḥdati", Aghāni 'l-Madīnah 'l-Mayyitah, Baghdad, 1957, no page numbers.

51. Man for Himself, p.53.

52. From his poem "Lā Aḥad", Lam Yabqa illa 'l-I'tirāf, Beirut, 1965, p.134; see also his poems, "Al-Maut Fuj'ah" and "Al-Wajh al-Ḍā'i'", ibid., pp.109-11 and 121-3 respectively; see also his first diwan, Madīnah bilā Qalb, Beirut, 1959, for more examples.

53. Collected Essays in Literary Criticism, p.71.

54. For a criticism of the contradictions in Adūnīs's poetry, especially in Al-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā, see J.I. Jabrā's essay, "Al-Tanāquḍāt fi 'l-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā", Shi'r quarterly, No.39, Summer, 1968, pp.112-25.

55. Adūnīs is better left unquoted here, for any quotation needs more elaboration than this work can allot for it; see his three last diwans Aghāni Mihyār al-Dimashqi, Kitāb al-Taḥawwulāt and Al-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā.

56. This is seen in some of his work; see in Thalāthūn Qaṣīdah poems No.1, 4, 5 and 6; see in Al-Qaṣīdah Kāf his poem No.24 in particular. See also the essays of J.I. Jabrā, "Fī Jubb al-Usūd", Al-Ḥurriyyah wa 'l-Ṭūfān, pp.43-57; and of the present writer, "Al-Qaṣīdah Kāf", Shi'r quarterly, No.16, Autumn, 1960, pp.131-44.

57. See above p.345 for al-Jawāhiri; pp.458, 463 and 466-7 for al-Ṭal; pp.475 and 482 for Ṭūqān; and p.539 for al-Shābbi.

58. See above pp.69 and 316; see also al-Wā'ili, Al-Shi'r al-Siyāsi 'l-'Irāqi fi 'l-Qarn al-Tāsi' 'Ashar, pp.152-3, 157 and 159 for the theme of self-exile in al-Akhras's poetry (also expressed as the wish to run away, see p.157), pp.68 and 171-2 for the recurrence of the theme in the poetry of al-Jamīl; and p.155 for an example from a third poet, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Shāwi.

59. 'Abd al-Raḥīm 'Umar, "Liman Taqra' al-Ajrās", Ughniyāt li 'l-Ṣamt, Beirut, 1963, p.115.

60. Jabrā I. Jabrā, "Al-Jīl al-Farīsah", Al-Madār al-Mughlaq, Beirut, 1964, p.90.

61. The present writer, "Al-'Audah min al-Nab' al-Ḥālim", in her diwan of the same name, p.142.

62. A.A. Hijāzi, "Ughniyat October", Lam Yabqa Illa 'l-I'tirāf, p.128.

63. From al-Sayyāb's poem, "Al-Nahr wa 'l-Maut", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.144.

64. From Ḥāwi's poem, "Al-Jisr", Nahr al-Ramād, p.140.

65. Ibid., p.138.

66. See "Bawādir al-Rafḍ fi 'l-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth", pp.94-5.

67. From the present writer's poem, "Al-Manfiyy", Shi'r quarterly, No.16, Autumn, 1960, p.45.

68. I. Ismā'īl, op.cit., pp.412-3.

69. "Tajribati 'l-Shi'riyyah", Al-Ādāb, March, 1966, p.189.

70. Adūnīs, "Ilā Sīzīf", Aghāni Mihyār al-Dimashqi, p.127.

71. Al-Sayyāb, "Risālah min Maqbarah", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.81.

72. Khalīl Hāwi, "Al-Sandabād fī Riḥlatihi 'l-Thāminah", Al-Nāy wa 'l-Rīḥ, p.98.

73. Ibid., p.110.

74. For a single example, compare the implied irony in his poem, "Ughniyah fī Shahr Āb", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, pp.22-6 with the tragic tone of a poem such as "Unshūdat al-Maṭar".

75. From her poem, "Tashukku bi Ḥubbi", Wajadtuhā, third edition, Beirut, 1962, p.34.

76. From her poem, "Lan Abī'a Ḥubbahu", ibid., p.106.

77. From her poem, "Dhikrayāt", ibid., p.44.

78. From her poem, "Fi 'l-Kaun al-Mashūr", ibid., p.62.

79. See for example her poem, "Hal Kāna Ṣudfah?", ibid., pp.55-7.

80. For poems of agony see her three poems, "Thalāth Marāthin li Ummi", Qarārat al-Maujah, pp.99-111; and her lovely poem "Khams Aghānin li 'l-Alam", Shajaratu 'l-Qamar, pp.52-63 in which she arrives at ecstacy in pain; for poems in which a philosophical natural tone prevails see for example, "Al-Shakk al-Thāni" and "Al-Zā'ir al-Ladhī lam Yaji'", in which she addresses an old lover, absent from the scene, philosophizing over the change that happens to people with time; the poems reveal an interesting, original attitude at great variance to traditional attitudes prevalent in such poetry. Although the tone is matter of fact, the poetess's natural warmth and her paradoxical treatment invest them with life and interest; Qarārat al-Maujah, pp.126-8 and 118-20 respectively. Compare these with her exalted tone in "Ughniyat Ḥubb li 'l-Kalimāt", Shajaratu 'l-Qamar, pp.88-94.

81. For a few examples, a wistful tone dominates a poem like "Hādhī hia 'l-Laḥẓah", Rasā'il Min London, pp.34-5, tenderness is shown in a poem like "Ilā Ṣadīq", ibid., pp.32-3, and a subtle irony in a poem like "Ilā Shā ir Kabīr", ibid., pp.51-6.

82. In his diwan, Aqūlu Lakum, his poem of the same name has several passages in which the poet is addressing his audience in a rather oratorical fashion, although mitigated by the very simplified language and the use of free verse, with less resounding rhymes; see especially pp.87-99. N.B. the sudden epigramatic sentences.

83. Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, however, has several poems in which she sometimes arrives at ecstacy in her description of an object, as she does in her poems, "Ughniyat Ḥubb li 'l-Kalimāt" and "Ughniyah li 'l-Qamar", Shajaratu 'l-Qamar, pp.77-83; "Ilā Wardah Baidā'", ibid., pp.161-3; "Al-Nahr al-Mughanni", ibid., pp.171-3; "Ughniyah li Shams al-Shitā'", Qarārat al-Maujah, pp.165-71, etc. In her emotional involvement in these poems, she is very reminiscent of Keats.

84. See Ḥijāzi's poem, "Rithā' al-Māliki", Lam Yabqa illa 'l-I'tirāf, pp.60-9; and see 'Abd al-Ṣabūr's poem, "Abū Tammām", Aqūlu Lakum, pp.49-52

85. See al-Sayyāb's poems on the Algerian theme, "Ilā Jamīlah Bū Hairad", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, pp.69-77; and "Fī 'l-Maghrib al-'Arabi", ibid., pp.82-9; 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyāti, "Ughniyat Intiṣār", Al-Majd li 'l-Aṭfāl wa 'l-Zaitūn, second edition, Beirut, 1958, pp.75-7; "Ilā Mālik Ḥaddād", Al-Nār wa 'l-Kalimāt, Beirut, n.d., pp.170-5; Nizār Qabbāni, "Naḥnu wa Jamīlah", Habībati, second edition, Beirut, 1964, pp.172-80; Nāzik al-Malā'ikah, "Al-Rāqiṣah al-Madhbūḥah", Qarārat al-Maujah, pp.121-5; and "Naḥnu wa Jamīlah", Shajaratu 'l-Qamar, pp.109-12; (N.B. the many poems on Jamīlah Bū Ḥairad in this period); Aḥmad Hijāzi, "Al-Maut fī Wahrān", Lam Yabqa illa 'l-I'tirāf, pp.129-32. See also a special number of Shi'r quarterly on the Algerian revolution, No.17, Winter, 1961.

86. Her recent diwan, Al-Lail wa 'l-Fursān, Beirut, 1969, is announced by the publishers as a confirmation of the "voice of the /Palestine/ resistence." See Al-Ādāb, October, 1969, the back cover; she had been publishing her poems of resistence ever since the 1967 war; see several numbers of Al-Ādāb since that date.

87. See an essay by the present writer on Qabbāni's attitude towards women and love, "Shi'r Nizār Qabbāni, Wathīqah Ijtimā'iyyah Hāmmah", Al-Ādāb, November, 1957, pp.11-3. The present writer received a letter from Qabbāni agreeing with the ideas put forward in the essay. Letter dated November 1st, 1957. See also Muḥyi 'l-Dīn Ṣubḥi, Nizār Qabbāni, Shā'iran wa Insānan, Beirut, 1958, in which Qabbāni's relationship with woman is described; see also J. Kamāl al-Dīn, Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth wa Rūḥ al-'Aṣr, his chapter on him, especially pp.348-90.

88. Examples in their works are many. For a single example from each see Ṣāyigh's poem No.1 in Thalāthūn Qaṣīdah; and al-Khāl, "Al-Ḥiwār al-Azali", Al-Bi'r al-Mahjūrah, pp.55-62; see also Jabrā's essays "Al-Mafāzah wa 'l-Bi'r wa 'l-Lāh" on al-Khāl, Al-Hurriyyah wa 'l-Ṭūfān, pp.30-42 especially pp.35-42; and "Fī Jubb al-Usūd" on Ṣāyigh, ibid., pp.43-57, especially pp.45-7 and 56-7.

89. See the protest on this by Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb, in his introduction to Dīwān al-Waṭan al-Muḥtal, edited and introduced by him, Damascus, 1968, p.11.

90. See for example a poem by al-Sayyāb, "Qāfilatu 'l-Ḍayā'", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, pp.59-65; several poems by al-Bayyāti including "Yaumiyyāt 'Arabi fī Isrā'īl" in Al-Majd li 'l-Aṭfāl wa 'l-Zaitūn, pp.5-15 and his famous poem, "Al-Malja' al-'Ishrūn", Abārīq Muhashshamah, pp.13-5; Nizār Qabbāni, "Qiṣṣat Rachel Schwarenberg", Qaṣā'īd, pp.164-73; Tawfīq Ṣāyigh, his poems No.1, 5 and "Nashīd Waṭani", Thalathun Qaṣīdah, and his poem No. 24 in Al-Qaṣīdah Kāf; the present writer, "Al-Shahīd al-Mahjūr", and "Bilā Judhūr", Al-'Audah min al-Nab' al-Hālim, pp.68-74 and 146-60 respectively.

91. Pp.89-93.

92. P.622.

93. Ibid., p.623.

94. The Triple Thinkers, p.199.

95. See a quotation by Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb from a letter by one of these Palestinian poets confirming the above idea, Dīwān al-Arḍ al-Muḥtallah, pp.98-9.

96. From his poem, "Hunā Bāqūn", Ashuddu ʿalā Aydīkum, first published at Haifa, n.d., and incorporated in Dīwān al-Waṭan al-Muḥtal, p.505.

97. From his poem, "Khiṭāb min Sūq al-Biṭālah", Dami ʿalā Kaffi, the second diwan of the poet first published at Nazareth, 1967, and incorporated ibid., p.323.

98. "Yaumiyyāt Jurḥ Filasṭīni", ibid., p.262.

99. See the diwans of Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb, ʿĀʾidūn, Beirut, 1959, and Wāḥat al-Jaḥīm, Beirut, 1964; and of Kamāl Nāṣir, Jirāḥ Tughanni, Beirut, 1960.

100. Published and re-published in magazines and newspapers all over the Arab world, see for a single example his poem, "Manshūrāt Fidāʾiyyah ʿalā Judrān Israʾīl", Al-Ādāb, October, 1969, pp.1-3.

101. It was only recently that Dīwān al-Waṭan al-Muḥtal came to the possession of the present writer. It is therefore difficult to study Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb's edition of the diwans of these Palestinian poets living in Israel is very valuable; it includes three diwans by Maḥmūd Darwīsh, Awrāq al-Zaitūn, first published, Haifa, 1964, ʿĀshiq min Filasṭīn, first published, Haifa, 1966, and Ākhir al-Lail, first published, Acre, 1967 ;al-Khaṭīb incorporated also other poems from periodicals; of Samīḥ al-Qāsim's work the anthology also includes three diwans, Aghāni ʾl-Durūb, n.p. mentioned by al-Khaṭīb for first publication and n.d.; Dami ʿAlā Kaffi, mentioned above , 1967; and Dukhān al-Barākīn, first published at Nazareth, n.d.; and some single poems; the anthology also includes Tawfīq Zayyād's diwan, Ashuddu ʿalā Aydīkum and some single poems by him; a few by the poet Sālim Jubrān, and by several others.

SECTION 3: DICTION

This is a period of revolt against poetic conventions. Every revolt in poetry is, in the first place, as C.M. Bowra puts it

> a matter of vocabulary and the use of words... Words are the be-all and the end-all of poetry, and the use of a different vocabulary means that poetry changes in character... In practice this means that words and mannerisms which are worn out with use have to be discarded and replaced by others which are fresh and unspoiled.[1]

It is not possible to assess the real changes that take place in a new poetic era without paying special attention to the way poets began using their words. F.W. Bateson says on this

> It is to words... that I invite the historian of poetry to turn. I suggest that /the history of poetry/ is a part of the general history of language, and that its changes of style and mood are merely the reflection of changing tendencies in the uses to which language is being put.[2]

Writers are not agreed whether poetic language should be a select vehicle recognizing an essential difference between the language of poetry and that of prose, or whether words are only to be judged in their relations to other words. Badawi al-Jabal,[3] himself a poet who tends to be very selective in the choice of the right word for the right meaning, stressed the idea that no word was unpoetic if used in the right context and company.* I. al-Sāmarrā'i, on the other hand, thinks that the poet ought to be selective in his choice of words: " عليه ان يختار فيتحرّى الجميل المناسب والانيق الحسن "[4] This idea has been put forward also

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* Aside from I.A. Richards' statement to the same effect, quoted above,[3] T.S. Eliot gives a sound general statement on this when he says "a poem is not made only out of 'beautiful words'. I doubt whether from the point of view of sound alone, any word is more or less beautiful than another - within its own language... The ugly words are the words not fitted for the company in which they find themselves; there are words which are ugly because of rawness or because of antiquation; there are words which are ugly because of foreignness or ill-breeding...: but I do not believe that any word well-established in its own language is either beautiful or ugly."[9]

by Amīn Nakhlah who insisted on the choice of the single word and on extreme care in the construction of sentences.[5] The Symbolist S.'Aql also stressed the importance of the single word in poetry. In his work he showed a Symbolist sensibility which puts great significance on the sound of the single word.[6]

Arab poets need not go out of the Arab poetic heritage for a fine and universally applicable definition of the language of poetry. Al-Imām al-Marzūqi had brilliantly defined it for them. Writing on the language of 'amūd al-shi'r, he said:

وعيار اللفظ الطبع والرواية والاستعمال ، فما
سلم مما يهجنه عند العرض عليها فهو المختار المستقيم .
وهذا في مفرداته وجملته مراعى لان اللفظة تستكرم
بانفرادها فاذا ضامّتها ما لا يوافقها عادت الجملة مجفوة . [7]

Arab writers are usually in the habit of discussing only one or two aspects of the diction of poetry,* and the field is still ripe for further research.** Ibrāhīm al-Sāmarrā'i's book, Lughat al-Shi'r bain Jīlain,

* Nāzik al-Malā'ikah in Qadāyā treated two subjects connected with language, the responsibility of the poet towards achieving correctness of language, and the meaning of repetition.[10] M. al-Nuwaihi in his book, Qadiyyat al-Shi'r al-Jadīd, wrote an excellent study on the vitality of language in the new poetry and on the necessary relation between the language of poetry and the language of common speech, but did not treat other topics.[11] 'Izzidīn Ismā'īl in his book, Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āsir, also treated this topic as well as the phenomenon of abiguity in modern Arabic poetry.[12]

** Further research into the language of modern Arabic poetry should be a fascinating undertaking because of the dynamic quality of the modern epoch, (when words and expressions are being coined all the time and their connotative value is being explored). Many topics need research and examination, for example, the infiltration of colloquial words into the language of poetry, the influence of the colloquial on syntax and on the spirit of language, the role (if any) poetry is playing in simplifying the written language, the catchwords most used in any one single poetic epoch (a study which would supply us with further information on the diverse influences playing on the poets of a given period, as well as give us a key to the ideas and ideals which pre-occupied the minds of these poets), the coinage of new words and phrases, the way poets have been trying to develop the language not only towards a more connotative power but also towards a greater manipulation of words to perform new functions (such as the use of nouns as adjectives), etc. It is essential that such studies be made when the language is still at this stage of its development, before greater changes take place, as they certainly will.

is a study in the language of the best known Iraqi poets in the twentieth century, a refreshing discussion by a linguist who accepts and calls for change in the language of poetry. It thus breaks the rigid conservatism of Arab linguists since the revival. Nevertheless al-Sāmarrā'i deals only with the single word and deliberately[13] refrains from dealing with the subject of word relations and sentence formation which would bring him into the realms of imagery and style.

The research done on the language of poetry in the present work had perforce to be intermittent. The results might be nevertheless regarded as a general basis for a more specialized work on the subject. A short resumé will help to give a general continuous picture of the development of the poetic language in this century.

It is not true that the language of the neo-Classical poets was a direct imitation of the language of the Classical poetry. Shauqi's exuberant diction was rarely obsolete or archaic. At its best it was excitingly vivid. Generally, his language was denotative and explicit, stressing the full "primary meaning" of words,[14] as is the case with all poetry of statement. But it was also vivid, polished, precise and alive with emotion. Ismā'īl Ṣabri on the other hand, was perhaps the first modern poet to achieve a kind of metaphysical quality in his poetry. His diction was sometimes connotative and misty, always very urban and very cultivated.[15] Ḥāfiẓ showed great vitality in his use of the verb, and his employment of a language of irony and humour was a great achievement.[16] Muṭrān, the most progressive poet among his generation, although deeply aware of the necessity of change in poetic language, did not have enough courage to introduce great changes. His long poem, "Nairūn" is a regressive attempt to prove linguistic ability by writing a long poem in monorhyme.[17]

The political poetry which started to be important in the twenties, was responsible for many changes in the poetic diction. Words were

chosen for their directness, clarity and emotional power. A great trend towards simplicity is seen, coupled, however, with a trend towards dilution, increased rhetoricism, pompousness and an unnecessary repetition of words and phrases. Many catch-words originated in the political poetry of this period of which contemporary poetry is not yet rid.[18]

In Iraq, al-Raṣāfi's language, perhaps more than that of any other poet of the time, shows the marked struggle between Classical and modern affinities. Side by side with very Classical words (some of which were obsolete and archaic), one finds simple words from the current vocabulary which through over-simplification sometimes arrived at a flat banality of expression.[19] The same struggle is seen in al-Zahāwi, but he was capable of even a greater over-simplification. At his hands language completely lost its former weight as a value in itself.[20] Negatively, this produced many unpoetic (even anti-poetic) passages; yet positively, poetry was emancipated from the age when it was synonymous with lofty, flowery language and luxurious resonance.[21] Simplification of poetic language is also encountered in al-Ṣāfi. Although a certain lack of lustre and carelessness in the use of language can be detected,[22] he was able to choose words with a lower pitch creating poetry with a conversational tone yet previously unattained. Al-Jawāhiri's rich and carefully selected diction, often charged with an emotional power, supplied modern Arabic poetry with a poetic idiom denoting anger, frustration and rejection. Originally direct and overpowering in al-Jawāhiri, this poetic idiom was later able to lend itself to a more oblique expression in avant-garde poetry.[23]

In Syria, Badawi 'l-Jabal's great sensitiveness to the beauty of the verbal ornament, his elaborate, sometimes magical, use of words, were strengthened by the exploitation of the evocative potential. His Symbolic use of words seems to be quite independent of the conscious

Symbolist experiment of ʿAql and Fāris, stemming rather from the tradition of mystical poetry in Arabic.[24]

In Lebanon, despite the fact that al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr borrowed from folk-poetry, translated from French, and worked in journalism, his linguistic basis retained Classical strength and effectiveness. He borrowed his words from nature and the elements, and presented them polished and charged with emotion.[25] As has been just explained, Amīn Nakhlah insisted on choice, polish, and word sculpture, but his choice lacked spontaneity and a sustained emotional effect. A new emphasis on the value of language for its own sake emerged.

In East Jordan, al-Tal conducted a two-sided experiment in language. On the one hand his nonchalance in the use of language was irritating. On the other, he borrowed extensively and effectively from the language of life around him, from the Jordanian dialect, and from the diction of his own profession, law, so that he was predominantly 'modern' in his language, despite some deviations. A streak of light-hearted irony is sustained in most of his verse. The experiment was fresh and of great vitality.[26]

In Palestine, Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān also introduced the language of irony, sarcasm and humour, but his language was much more terse and showed a greater precision in the use of words.[27]

However, it was Gibrān who has given us the greatest adventure in poetic language achieved by any Arab author in modern times. This writer changed the whole sensibility of modern Arabs towards the use of words.[28] He was aided by such poets in al-Mahjar as Nuʿaimah and ʿArīḍah, but it was his style and conscious[29] achievement in language which dominated the literary experiment of his time and maintained a considerable influence on the following. This was a complete revolution in language, looking for variety, selectiveness, the current idiom, and a different inter-relation of words.

In the Arab East, the attempts of poets like Shukri and Abū Shādi to change the current poetic idiom were not successful. Shukri often chose words ill-suited to the context.[30] Abū Shādi's hold on the language was weak.[31]

Romantic poets like Nāji were able to arrive at a relative modernity of language and a different sensibility, but the overall effect was spoilt by verbosity and the use of too many adjectives.[32] Romantic spleen dominated the diction of many experiments in the thirties and forties. The situation was saved firstly by a diction of ecstacy and celebration introduced by poets like ʿAli Maḥmūd Ṭāhā and Ilyās Abū Shabakah.[34] Secondly by the Symbolist experiment with its insistence on distillation and the select use of words. The influence of the Symbolists, especially Saʿīd ʿAql, on contemporary Arabic poetry, is far greater than is normally recognized. Several of its attributes pervade the contemporary poetry and are seen especially in the strong trend of some of this poetry to use connotative language often invested with a tone of reverence and mystical fervour. The excessive use of strong, repulsive words was begun in this period with Shafīq al-Maʿlūf's ʿAbqar and some poems by Abū Shabakah, as has been discussed above.[35] This begins a trend in the use of diction in contemporary Arabic poetry.

This short survey shows the immense vitality of the language of Arabic poetry during this century. When the fifties arrived, the poetic tools were already very flexible. Moreover, this active history of experimentation was enormously strengthened by the sound poetic education in Western poetic theory available to the new poets.

It is difficult to assess the influence on the new Arab poets of such writers on the language of poetry as T.S. Eliot ("Every revolution in poetry is apt to be, and sometimes to announce itself as, a return to common speech");[36] Ezra Pound ("Use no superfluous word or adjective which does not reveal something");[37] T.E. Hulme ("Poetry is no more nor

less than a mosaic of words, so great exactness is required for each one"; poets should seek "always the hard, definite, personal word")[38], and

> I object even to the best of the Romantics... /for to them/ poetry that isn't damp isn't poetry at all. They cannot see that accurate description is a legitimate object of verse. Verse to them always means a bringing in of some of the emotions that are grouped around the word infinite.[39]

or Rainer Maria Rilke

> The poet's task is increased by the strange obligation to set apart his words from the words of everyday life and communication thoroughly and fundamentally. No word of the poem (I mean here every 'and' or 'the') is identical with the same-sounding word in common use and conversation.[40]

and many others. The poets were reading extensively and assimilating various influences. One can, in fact, see the influence of Eliot's theory above on several poets whose experiment showed a conscious knowledge of it, such as Ṣalāḥ ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr.[41] Rilke's concept of the poetic language is seen in the practice of Adūnīs, whose poetry shows very little affinity with the diction of common speech,[42] and, despite its abundance, reflects a meticulous care in the use of every auxiliary word in the poem. But again Adūnīs, in his successful attempt to 'break the neck of logic' shows the influence of Rimbaud who wished "to arrive at the unknown through the disordering of all the senses".[43] Pound's and Hulme's principle of condensation and economy was perhaps the best poetic rule advocated by some writers.[44] Some of the legacy of Arabic Romanticism to the fifties was, as has been seen, a diluted language, a flabby poetic structure and a tendency to use too many adjectives.

The influence of Eliot's idea of the proximity of a poetry in revolution to common speech can be further detected in the deliberate attempts by some Western educated poets to engraft words from the vernacular on a Classical background. Many of these attempts were purely conceptual. For a single example, Ḥāwi's use of occasional words from common usage is only a sporadic attempt and a word like "عشرشـــــر" in the following sentence remains isolated among others of a different

standard: " شرّشت رجلاه في الوحـــــــــــــل "45

This should not mean, however, that the trend to approximate common speech originated in modern Arabic poetry with the recent spread of Eliot's ideas on the subject. These ideas would be of no value if this were the case, because Eliot was describing a natural phenomenon in art growth. As has been shown in this work, attempts in modern Arabic poetry to return to the current language and abandon Classical pedantry had started with al-Zahāwi whose experiment was continued in a finer manner by al-Ṣāfi and was brought to a brilliant culmination by the French-educated Syrian poet, Nizār Qabbāni, who started publishing in the forties. Qabbāni has done, more than any other contemporary poet, to bring the language of poetry as near as possible to the level of the current language, both the written and the vernacular.* In many examples of his erotic and socio-political verse, he is able to approximate also the rhythms of common speech, especially when he repeats the patter of women, or talks informally. The immediacy of the influence of his poetry on his audience (and he has absolutely the largest audience of poetry in the Arab world) shows before anything else that he uses the contemporaneous social i included in the Arab poetic idiom, such as " جـــورب ", " وجـــاق ", contempo " افيـــون ", " خطوط احمرهـــا ", " ارهابية مجنـــــدة " and hundreds of others.48 Examples of his use of words from the vernacular are " رز ", "التنّـــورة ", "ليراتـــــك ", etc.49 Expressions from common speech are also, an also available, such as " الفـهـمـنـا ", " صلّـى على يدهـا وتـــــاب "50

and the very spirit of the language:

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* Qabbāni was usually very careful not to use words which are now obsolete and only rarely gave way usually for the sake of a stubborn rhyme as when he said " خصر عميـــد ".46 He was very courageous in using in his poetry foreign words which he Arabized such as "تابـــو", "بنطـــال" and " جـــاز ",47 he said " خصر عميـــد ".46 He was very courageous in using in his poetry iforeign words which he Arabized such as "تابـــو", "بنطـــال" and " جـــاز ",47 " افيـــون ", " خطوط احمرهـــا ", " ارهابية مجنـــــدة " and hundreds of others.48 Examples of his use of words from the vernacular are " رز ", "التنّـــورة ", "ليراتـــــك ", etc.49 Expressions from common speech are also available, such as " الفـهـمـنـا ", " صلّـى على يدهـا وتـــــاب ", etc.50

51 هذا الغلام انا ·· وانت معي ممدودة في جانبي ·· لحنـــا
لا ·· ليس يعقل ان صورتنـــا هذى ·· ولسنا من حسوت لسنـــا

this heightened expression is in reality a direct translation of the vernacular equivalent. Even his eruptions into rhetoricism in some of his poetry is not alien to similar eruptions in common speech:

52 يا آل اسرائيـل ·· لا يأخذكم الغـــرور
عقـارب الساعـات ·· ان توقفـت
فانها لا بـد ان تـدور
ان اغتصاب الارض لا يخيفنـا
فالريش قد يسقط من اجنحـة النسـور

Qabbāni probably arrived at this through his poetic instinct. Other poets in the fifties had also an enlightened fore-knowledge of these principles, as is apparent from their techniques and writings, and we had some very honest attempts at applying adopted principles to practice. ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr has succeeded, in much of his poetry, in achieving a language that beats with the pulse of common speech, the single word being characterized by simplicity, the tone often intimate and the structure often conversational. However, his poetry is frequently marred by flabbiness, a loose phraseology and a misuse of obliquity:

53 ولسـت انا الامير يعيش في مصر بحضن النيل
يناغيـه مغنيـه
وملعقة من الذهب الصريح تطل من فيـه

The last line particularly is absurd. Al-Bayyāti's simplicity of language does not always achieve an intimacy of tone, for his style is too musical, enhanced in this by a constant use of rhyme. M.M. Badawi is saved from these dangers by both a strong phraseology and a conscious experimentation with metrics, described above, to arrive at a rhythm similar to that of "prose and conversation":

984 لا تحاول • فليس في مقدم الفجر
54 ما يزيل الظلام
انها كلها نظام بسيط من قبيل اللعب
وضعته قبيلة مجهولة
وعقدته الليالي

But contemporary Arab poets differ widely in their use of the poetic language. The one aim they have in common is to achieve freshness and contemporaneousness. They want to create in poetry a vocabulary liberated from the legacy of the forties with its mixed neo-Classical, Romantic and aesthetic Symbolist attributes: neo-Classical pomposity and rhetoricism, Romantic excesses (dilution, the use of many adjectives and of too many abstract or sentimental words) and vagaries, and the aesthetic labours of the early Symbolists with their insistence on poetry being brought to the verge of its frontiers with music. The trend was towards a more oblique use of words, but at the same time words had to be more precise in their ultimate meaning. A more dynamic language capable of expressing the modern situation of man in the Arab world was sought.

A marked attempt to use the verb as a vehicle of expression because of its greater vitality is seen to abound in avant-garde poetry:

55 عتمة تنزف من وهج الثمار
الجماهير التي يحلكها دولاب نار
وتموت النار في العتمة ، والعتمة تنحلّ لنار ••

Adjectives are used sparingly. Adūnīs can go several stanzas without using a single adjective, depending mainly on verbs and nouns. In al-Sayyāb's most famous poem, "Unshūdat 'l-Maṭar",[56] the principle of using adjectives only if they add something substantial to the meaning, is applied with great technical skill.*

Adūnīs's greatest adventure is with language. A wayward poet in

* The poem occupies over seven pages but has only fourteen adjectives, three of them a repetition. Each adjective is revealing of a necessary meaning in the context. This is not an exception. His poem "Risālah min Maqbarah", just to give another example, occupies four pages and has only nine adjectives. Both poems use some adjectives denoting colour.

the use of his words, he has an unsurpassable wealth of poetic vocabulary. In his achievement of a poetic style strictly his own, he is a daring adventurer, imposing on the language of poetry words which it had never embraced before:

57 اطعمته المغنيسيا
وعسل الخلّ وماء الزاج
وجوهر الزجاج

A poet of suggestiveness and mystical fervour, the primary senses of words with him almost disappear in favour of their derived meanings and associations. With his mind dwelling on the borderline of poetry and philosophy, he invested the language of poetry with a wealth of mystical, metaphysical and philosophical vocabulary. But his words tend sometimes to be vague and abstract, and they often lack the infective warmth which abounds in al-Sayyāb. He borrows his words from everything, from all of man's experience, from all of nature's elements and animals, from diseases, concrete objects, and emotions, from the Islamic and Christian religious experience, etc. However, his greatest adventure is in word associations and relations; in phrases like these:

58 احشاء صخره ، اجراس الجبال ، عنق السحابة ، الزهر المقفل ،
المطر الاحمر ، رفعت دمي ، لا خليج المرايا ولا وردة الرياح .

The words cause a revolution in each other and are, in their "new sudden combinations", a far distance from the poetry of direct statement in which the words are arranged in conventional and logical order.[59] His repetition of typical words, criticised by Jabrā,[60] is a natural outcome of a rather sustained outlook. Poets with a distinctive personality always have their own vocabulary and key words. Jabrā criticises also in Adūnīs a tendency to repeat himself and produce a flabby structure, "an exaggerated undulation in the river of words".[61] Although Adūnīs is too much given to verbal felicities which can irritate the reader, there is no doubt that his work is central to the creation of a new

Arabic poetic idiom. A poet of conflict and of paradox, his greatest contradiction is the uncompromising discrepancy between his theories on the written Arabic language which, he insisted, lacked in vitality,[62] and his own practice which sought to make its strongest linguistic links with the great wealth of the Classical treasury. However, despite his possession of a luminous and rare Classical vocabulary, he shows a surprising lack of variety in both style and tone, which decreases the tension of his poetry.[63] In fact, Adūnīs tries to keep his poetry at maximum intensity and the "transitions between passages of greater and less intensity", to borrow Eliot's phrase,[64] are rare. These passages, described by Eliot as necessarily prosaic, save the poem from an unbearably sustained tension, making room for the necessary fluctuation of emotion which is "essential to the musical structure of the whole",[65] and thus preserving the poem's equilibrium and its "pattern of resolved stresses".[66]

Al-Sayyāb's language is clearer, more immediate, and invested with more emotion than Adūnīs's, but is at the same time less varied and original. However, al-Sayyāb's greatest achievement in language is his unrivalled precision in the choice of words. There is no arbitrariness in this choice but instead an inevitability, as if the word is absolutely the best that could be chosen to fit the context. Stemming from the primeval elements of an Iraqi countryside, his imagination borrows not only from the visual scenery of this nature, but also from the riot of sound in it. Al-Sāmarrā'i has aptly noticed al-Sayyāb's strong auditory imagination and the way he feels the sounds he describes.[67] And indeed, when reading his poetry one is infected with the experience of this auditory sensibility. Poets mostly use visual imagery. Sound images are usually less developed in people, poets included, but once transmitted, are perhaps more easily received and remembered. A poet who has a particular sensibility to the sounds of life, and can portray them in

auditory images, is always at a gain.* The effect of the spade's clinking noise crawling towards the limbs of the dying poet is unforgettable:

69 رنين المعول الحجري يزحف نحو اطرافي

Words denoting sound in his poem, "Unshūdat 'l-Maṭar" alone include the following:

تنبض ، كركر ، مطر ، تعاهس ، ينثر الغناء ، تنشج ، اصيح ، الصدى ، نشيج ، اسمع ، الرعود ، يرن ، يهطل ، تطحن .

al-Sayyāb's love of the Iraqi countryside is linked always with human experience and he stood in awe of the vague Romantic beauty of nature. This is why he was able to be always so precise. Alliteration is also an important feature of his linguistic technique.[70] His adjectives which, as has just been described, he uses with caution, are usually very telling and never dull, but, at the same time, they do not reflect a quest for the rare epithet as one can see in some of Nāzik al-Malā'ikah's poetry. The inevitability of al-Sayyāb's epithets, one feels, stems from the necessity to describe faithfully a picture born in the poet's mind from the immediate fusion of idea and image at the moment of poetic creation.

Al-Sayyāb's language, like that of Adūnīs, has strong Classical roots, but he does not refrain from using a word from the vernacular here and there.[71] Here again one feels that he has used the inevitable word, and a marked difference is felt between his usage and that of, say,

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* The Palestinian poet, Samīḥ al-Qāsim has an interesting stanza showing the greater vividness in the memory of sound images:

68 حتّى ... لا اذكر قسماتك
لكنني اجهد كي اذكر
في قلبي خفقة خطواتك
عصفور ... يدرج ... او ينقر ..

Tawfīq Ṣāyigh when he says: " وبسمت حبيبي بدون سونيتـــــة ",* 72 for can one think of any Classical word which al-Sayyāb could have used instead of the word " درابـــــك " in the following verse without appearing absurdly pedantic?:

كان نقـر الدرباك منذ الاصيـــل
يتساقط مثل القمـــــار 73

More than one approach is detected in Nāzik al-Malā'ikah's use of words. In her purely descriptive poems one feels that her imagination creates many of her epithets and images at will. The result is often a cluster of adjectives and images of an original, dazzling beauty; the following are from her "Ughniyah li 'l-Qamar";

ام حـق عطر ملـون خضـــل ... يقطـر شهدا لكل مختـــرف
ام انت غد مزنبـــــق ارج ... ينعس فوق الاعشاب والسعف 74
. . . . . .
يا قبـلا سوسنيـــة سكبـــت ... شهدا صفى في ليلة عطـرة
ويا شفاها من الضياء دنـــت ... تمسح وجه العرائش النضـــرة

The adjectives are very select, and the language is sometimes sensuous and always warm. The use in the same poem of adjectives like فجريـــة , مكوكـــب , مريّـــش , etc., although superior, remains in the tradition of some Romantic poets of an earlier period, especially al-Hamshari.[75]

In Nāzik's best poems of experience, her language portrays a quality of absolute fitness to the meaning, something like al-Sayyāb's, although a little less compact. The following from a poem on the flood of the Tigris is typical of Nāzik's best poetry. The same sensuous texture of the words appears again:

انه يحمل في بطء وحـزم وسكينـــة 76
ساكبـــا من شفتيـــــه
قبلا طينيـة غطـــت مراعينا الحزينة

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* However, Ṣāyigh's use of these words fits the sarcastic tone of the poem, which is a mixture of mischief and pathos. Ṣāyigh's language is, in fact, characterised by strict precision and economy and marked, not by abundance and colour, but by depth of meaning, restraint, conscious elevation and simplicity seasoned with wit.

Khalīl Ḥāwi's language is also characterised by strength of phraseology and freshness. At his best, he uses a language vibrant with life and emotional effectiveness:

77 تحسدو ،تدور ، تزوغ زوبعة طروب
وارى الرياح تسيح ،تنبح من يديها
مثبع الريح المعطرة الجنوب

sometimes he successfully approximates the syntax, rhythm and spirit of common speech. The following is reminiscent of folk usage:

جارتي ،يا جارتي ، لا تسالين كيف عاد
78 عاد لي من غربة الموت الحبيب
عجر الدار يغني
وتغني عتبات الدار والخمر تغني في الجرار

However, Ḥāwi is a poet most affected by images of gloom and destruction, a continuation of a tradition begun by Shafīq al-Ma'lūf in 'Abqar and Ilyās Abū Shabakah in his two poems "Al-Daynūnah" and "Al-Qādhūrah". The fusilade of extremely repellent epithets and images which follow each other in an unrelenting outpour is a great blemish to an otherwise powerful poetry. The following words and expressions are all incorporated in twenty-five consecutive lines:[79] غاز، سموم ،حية ،عنصر الغجر، حمّى ، النمر الاعمى ، عرس الدم ، سيف ، العنق العاجي نهر احمر ، هول ، جمّده الموت ، دم محتقن ،ملغوم ، تعضه ،تكويه ،الف حرقة ،عتمة الازقة ،حشرجة مخنوقة وشهقة ، الافيون ،الزلزال في احشائها ،سور من النيران ،يعمي الليل ،العالم السفلي ينشق ،اوكار ،غول ،لعنات ،جريمة ،

Words of wilful ugliness. It is true that there is great scope for protest in contemporary Arab life, but to protest too much so as to seem "to have no natural feelings"[80] as Aldous Huxley puts it, is unacceptable in good art. Huxley rightly explains that "such excessive protestations can never be convincing". Many poems in Ḥāwi have a sustained necrophilous atmosphere.

Unsi 'l-Ḥaj writes in the same vein especially in his first volume, Lan, with the great difference that Ḥāwi aims at building a world over the wreck of so much misery and ugliness and al-Ḥaj, in absolute rebellion, aims at destroying and "defiling" all values.[81] The following are an example from his second volume, Al-Ra's al-Maqtū' :

82 لا تقيس الصرخة ، لا درجة البجع ، لا دريكة الدم ،لا سنة الدوبياحمن البدء
ملوكها في الخرائب عند باب الشحوذة السابع ،لا الجريمة ، لا جندلة النسار
والكناري ٠٠ الخ

Shauqi Abī Shaqrā stands at the extreme opposite, and his poetic language has a particular charm of its own. Like Qabbāni, his poetic diction is spontaneously linked with the current language, but without any of Qabbāni's occasional rhetoricism and self-assured, imposing tone. It is, rather, a language of childlike innocence and spontaneity, with a genuine seriousness and even pathos under the meek, heart-catching surface-tone. Even in very serious lines like the following, he sustains this:

اصغـــي الى سيزيـــف
يمشـي على البحار يا اختي
يقبل في حذائه الخفيـف
كأنه راقصة الباليـه [83]

The discussion of the language of modern Arabic poetry is far from exhausted, but it is impossible to extend it any longer. Brief examples of some representative experiments have been given. There remains a great deal that could be said on other poets too.

However, a brief mention of the deliberate grammatical changes attempted by some poets might help to elucidate further the trend towards innovation in language. It has become an established poetic trend to omit, as much as possible, the conjunction " و " between words and sentences. This is perhaps a direct effect of readings in Western poetry, especially English, but could be also the result of the wish to economize in the use of words and auxiliary articles. Another interesting attempt is the use of a noun to do the work of an adjective: " النوافذ الزجـــاج "[84] and " الوحدة الفراغ والدم الصقيع والركـــود الســـأم "[85]. But an attempt to enter the definite article " ال " on verbs (used especially by Yūsuf al-Khāl): " التمزق القهّي، التروض العصبي، التصغر الدنسي "[86], on words in the vocative: " يا القريب كالجنـــــون "[87] on nouns in construct: " ايهـا الشبح الملازمـــي "[88] and on the adverb: " وتحشـق الســـوراءهـــا "[89] was not destined to become a convention, although some of these uses have been known both in Classical and neo-Classical

poetry.[90] The reason for this does not lie mainly in the attacks directed to this kind of usage by critics foremost among whom was Nāzik al-Malā'ikah,[91] but also because the attempt stemmed, not from a genuine need of the language of poetry to approximate the vernacular by this particular means (for these are common usage in the vernacular), but from a deliberate conceptual wish on the part of the poets to do so. A change in art must answer to a real need, and when an attempt fails to take root, it might be taken as a proof that it did not stem from necessity.

Footnotes

1. C.M. Bowra, The Background of Modern Poetry, Oxford, 1946, p.5.
2. English Poetry and the English Language, Oxford, 1934, p.25.
3. See above, p.385.
4. Lughat al-Shi' r bain Jīlain, p.8.
5. See above, pp.438 and 439.
6. See above, pp.707, 709-10, 717 and 720.
7. Quoted by Sāmarrā'i, op.cit., p.134 from Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah.
8. See above, p.385.
9. The Music of Poetry, pp.18-9.
10. Pp. 289-300 and 228-38 respectively.
11. Pp. 109-16 and 39-44 respectively; see also his translation of part of T.S. Eliot's essay, "The Music of Poetry", pp.17-24.
12. Pp. 173-94.
13. See his conclusion on p.243.
14. An expression borrowed from F.N.W. Bateson, English Poetry and the English Language, p.58; see also pp.58-9 for a description of Augustan (Classical) poetry.
15. See above, pp.83-5.
16. See above, pp.111-2.
17. See above, pp.124-5.
18. See above pp.323 and 858-60. See an essay by George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language", Selected Essays, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1957, pp.143-57, in which the bad influence of politics on language is strongly described.
19. See above, pp.334-5.
20. See above, p.323.
21. See above, p.330.
22. See above, pp.337 and 340.
23. See above, pp.345-6.
24. See above, pp.383-5.
25. See above, p.423.
26. See above, pp.459-61.
27. See above, p.482.
28. See above, pp.188-90.
29. See above, p.189 for an assessment of his essay on music.
30. See above, pp.284-5.
31. See above, pp.519-20 and 529.
32. See above, pp.547-8.
33. See above, p.563.
34. See above, pp.636-7.

35. See above, pp.152 and 623.

36. The Music of Poetry, p.16.

37. From Ezra Pound's "Don'ts for Imagists", quoted by T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, his Metric and Poetry, New York, 1917, p.20.

38. As quoted by G. Bullough, The Trend of Modern Poetry, Edinburgh, 1949, pp.80-1.

39. Speculations, London, 1960, a Routledge edition, pp.126-7.

40. From a letter by Rilke to Countess Margot Sizzo-Crouz, written in 1922, Selected Letters, trans. Eva Rennie and ed. H.T. Moore, New York, 1960, pp.325-6.

41. 'Abd al-Ṣabūr's awareness of the various poetic techniques available to the modern poet is revealed in his autobiographical essay on his poetic experience, "Tajribati 'l-Shi'riyyah", Al-Ādāb, March, 1966, pp.3 and 199; see his description of his reaction to the poetry of Eliot and Rilke (the latter in translation), p.3; see also his answer to the questionnaire, "Mustaqbal al-Shi'r al-'Arabi al-Ḥadīth", Al-Ādāb, January, 1955, p.7.

42. Adūnīs's achievement of a private language, new and original, as Ismā'īl describes it, op.cit., pp.182-4, should not be mistaken for an affinity with common speech.

43. From a letter to George Izambard, written in 1871, Prose Poems from the Illuminations, trans. Louise Varèse, New York, 1946, p.xxiii.

44. See what J.I. Jabrā says, quoting Pound, in his answer to the questionnaire by Al-Ādāb, "Mustaqbal al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth", p.1; see also a translation by him of an essay on Hulme's poetic concept by A.R. Jones, entitled "Al-Nazariyyah 'l-Shi'riyyah 'ind T.E. Hulme", Al-Rihlah 'l-Thāminah, pp.65-83; see p.65 where Jabrā mentions his particular interest in Hulme; Jabrā was one of the foremost critics who attacked Romantic flabbiness and sentimentality; see also M. Badawi, op.cit., p.8, where he rejects the idea that words have a value in themselves, condemning Romantic excesses in accumulating meaningless images. To him, poetry is a concentrated kind of writing.

45. Nahr al-Ramād, p.13.

46. Qaṣā'id min Nizār Qabbāni, p.145.

47. Ibid., pp.125, 123 and 124 respectively.

48. Ibid., pp.101, 104, 173, 129 and 165 respectively.

49. Ibid., pp.141, 98 and 178 respectively.

50. Ibid., pp.140 and 64 respectively.

51. From his poem, " 'Ind Wāḥidah", ibid., pp.136-7.

52. From his poem, "Manshūrāt Fidā'iyyah alā Judrān Isrā'īl", Al-Ādāb, October, 1969, p.2.

53. Aqūlu Lakum, pp.77-8; see also a discussion of this aspect of 'Abd al-Ṣabūr's poetry in al-Nuwaihi, op.cit., pp.109-16, and in Ismā'īl, op.cit., pp.184-5; neither writer, it seems, saw any important weakness, worthy of mention, in 'Abd al-Ṣabūr's style.

54. From his poem, "Al-Kitāb al-Azraq", Rasā'l min London, p.47.

55. Bayādir al-Jū', pp.45-6.

56. Unshūdat al-Maṭar, pp.160-7.

57. Al-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā, p.99.

58. Ibid., pp.206, 207, 207, 208, 208, 240 and 245 respectively.

59. On his use of language, see Z.N. Maḥmūd, "Waqfat Shā'ir", Al-Thaqāfah, Cairo, No.44, 19th May, 1964, pp.13-6.

60. "Al-Tanāquḍāt fi 'l-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā", Shi'r quarterly, No.39, Summer, 1968, p.116 et passim.

61. Ibid., p.125; see also p.117 et passim.

62. See above, pp.866, and 877-8.

63. On variety see G. Rylands, Words and Poetry, p.28.

64. The Music of Poetry, p.18.

65. Ibid.

66. A Glossary of Literary Terms, under Tension.

67. Op.cit., pp.231-6.

68. From his poem, "Aḥkī li 'l-'Ālam", Dīwān al-Watan al-Muḥtal, p.415.

69. From his poem, "Al-Mi'wal al-Ḥajari", Iqbāl, p.40.

70. See above, pp. 916-7, 916n, and 944 footnotes 91 and 92.

71. On his use of words from the Iraqi vernacular, see al-Sāmarrā'i, op.cit., p.239.

72. From poem No.28, Thalāthūn Qaṣīdah.

73. From his poem, "'Urs fi 'l-Qaryah", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.37.

74. Shajaratu 'l-Qamar, pp.77-8; see also her lovely poem, "Ughniyat Ḥubb li 'l-Kalimāt", ibid., pp.88-94; see also "ilā Wardah Baiḍā'", ibid., pp.161-3.

75. See above, p.542.

76. From her poem, "Al-Nahr al-'Āshiq", Shajaratu 'l-Qamar, p.137.

77. From his poem, "Al-Nāy wa Rīḥ al-Raml fī Ṣauma'at Cambridge", Al-Nāy wa 'l-Rīḥ, p.31.

78. From his poem, "La'āzar 'Ām 1962", Bayādir al-Jū', pp.50-1.

79. From his poem, "Al-Sandabād fī Riḥlatihi 'l-Thāminah", Al-Nāy wa 'l-Rīḥ, pp.78-80.

80. Vulgarity and Literature, Edinburgh, 1930, p.37.

81. Nuhād Khayyāṭah, "Ra'y fī Qaṣīdat al-Nathr", Shi'r quarterly, No.25, Winter, 1963, p.101.

82. Beirut, 1963, p.56.

83. From his poem, "Al-Ḥay", Khuṭuwāt al-Malik, Beirut, 1960, p.40.

84. Yūsuf al-Khāl in his poem, "Al-Waḥdah", Al-Bi'r al-Mahjūrah, p.29.

85. Nadhīr 'Aẓmah in his poem, "Al-Laḥm wa 'l-Sanābil", Shi'r quarterly, No.3, Summer, 1957, p.47.

86. Yūsuf al-Khāl, from his poem, "Al-Waḥdah", p.28.

87. From his poem, "Al-Safar", ibid., p.71.

88. Tawfīq Ṣāyigh, poem No.10, Thalāthūn Qaṣīdah.

89. Adūnīs in his poem, "Al-Baʿth wa 'l-Ramād" as published in its first version, Shiʿr quarterly, No.3, Summer, 1957, p.5; he removed it from the poem published later in his diwan, Awrāq fi 'l-Rīh.

90. Verses from Classical poetry in which a definite article is added to a verb are famous (al-Mutanabbi's "ما انت بالحسن الترجي عطيته" and Dhu 'l-Kharaq al-Ṭahawi, "صوت الحصار البجدع"). In modern times, al-Jawāhiri used the definite article with the construct, "لم يبل منهجه بالسالكيه ولم يلح اثر (وبعبد)", Dīwān al-Jawāhiri, Vol.II, p.183, from his poem, "Laylah maʿahā"; and al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr used it several times, e.g. "تروي ظماء القاصديك", from his poem "Al-Muʿallim", Shiʿr al-Akhṭal al-Saghīr, p.170; see also pp.54 and 215 for more examples.

91. See her chapter, "Al-Nāqid al-ʿArabi wa 'l-Masʾūliyyah 'l-Lughawiyyah", Qadāyā, pp.279-300.

SECTION 4: A SHORT NOTE ON DRAMATIC POETRY IN ARABIC

Having now covered the territories of form, tone and language, a word on dramatic poetry in Arabic seems to be appropriate here, because dramatic poetry is greatly dependent on these three elements. The dramatic verse of Shauqi was not discussed before for two reasons. First, it should be said that while dramatic verse was an adventure on the part of the ageing poet who experimented with it towards the end of his career (an attempt which proves Shauqi's basic vitality), yet it was not a dramatic achievement. Thus it remains, in the final analysis, a poetic achievement which introduced the poet's art to new realms of poetic experience such as the pure Romantic emotion he displayed in the love pieces scattered in several of his plays.[1] Secondly, the discussion of dramatic verse is an important and complex undertaking which should be attempted only if there were enough scope for it, which there isn't. This short note is not intended, therefore, to be comprehensive or to deal with the purely dramatic aspect of verse plays. It is a tentative attempt to contemplate the Arabic experiment of dramatic verse only in the three aspects of form, tone and language, and this only very briefly.

The form and language Shauqi used in his dramatic verse and the tone he employed were particularly unsuitable for the stage.[2] The two hemistich form is not, and can never be, a possible medium for dramatic verse. This is because dramatic verse, more than any other, should approximate the way people address each other in normal fashion. T.S. Eliot shows that the changing rhythms of speech made blank verse as a medium for the theatre (once so successful in Shakespeare) obsolete in the nineteenth century, because it was "difficult to preserve any illusion of reality".[3] What one would like to point out here with regard to the two hemistich form in Arabic is that this form would have never, at any phase of its long history, succeeded in preserving an illusion of reality.

People simply do not address each other in balanced, mono-rhymed rhythmical units.

Not only the form but also the tone and language in Shauqi's dramatic poetry were a hindrance. The general tone was either oratorical or, as in the love pieces, impregnated with lyrical rhetoricism, while on the theatre one needs a poetry capable of a variety of tones emulating the different moods and ways people address each other. The language must also aspire towards this kind of achievement, where it will have not only the directness and simplicity of the language of people performing the acts of normal living, but will also convey the rhythms and accent of the speech of the time.

This brings us to the discussion of a new dramatic experiment in verse by Ṣalāḥ ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr. Between Shauqi and ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr, many poets have attempted verse plays. The most famous among them is the Egyptian poet, ʿAzīz Abāẓah who uses a form more rigid, a tone more oratorical, and a language more pedantic than Shauqi.[4] But since this discussion is not intended to examine dramatic poetry in Arabic either historically or dramatically, but only from the point of view of form, tone and language, the best thing one feels one could do is to examine the two most different types of dramatic verse available to us in Arabic, as exemplified by Shauqi and ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr in his verse play, Maʿsāt al-Ḥallāj (1965).

Maʿsāt al-Ḥallāj is written in modern free verse. Four metres are employed: al-rajaz, al-wāfir, al-mutaqārab and al-mutadārak (al-khabab). In his appendix to the play, ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr explains that he chose al-rajaz, al-wāfir and al-mutadārak because of the changes that can be inflicted on them (through ziḥāf), mentioning that al-mutadārak in particular is suitable to emulate the language of speech. He asserts, rightly, that writing for the theatre will introduce flexibility to the music of metres.[5]

Although the best test of this poetry is to hear it spoken on the stage, one feels that ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr has succeeded in good measure in the

passages in which he employed rajaz and mutadārak. The last is, in fact, the major metre in the play. His use of this metre shows great flexibility and the original "dancing" music of the metre is greatly subdued through his deliberate[6] use of that particular version of zihāf (fā'ilu) discussed above.[7] In certain passages, the emulation of ordinary speech is very successful.[8] His use of rajaz is also usually apt and succeeds in emulating the conversational tone:

9 نعم فقد يكون امره حكاية طريفة
اقصها لزوجتي حين اعود في المساء
فهي تحب اطباق الحديث في موائد العشاء

However, he shows a real capability of rhythmic manipulation when he erupts, in an elegaic monologue in rajaz, to heightened lyricism suitable to the occasion. Al-Shibli, one of the main characters of the play, is addressing here in elegiac tone his friend, al-Ḥallāj, as the latter hangs crucified from a tree:

10 قد كنت عطرا نائما في وردته
لم انسكبت ؟
ودرّة مكنونة في بحرها
لم انكشفت ؟

However, his use of al-wāfir and al-mutaqārab does not seem so successful. This results from the great inherent musicality of these two metres and their extreme fluidity. This should not mean that these metres cannot be used for the stage, but that the poet in this instance has not been able to rid them of their inherent musical quality.[11] His use of rhyme in most of the passages written in these two metres worsens the effect by heightening the music.

When successful, 'Abd al-Ṣabūr is aided greatly by his capacity to use extremely simple language. There are the heightened passages[12] which are usually pregnant with metaphor, but he tries mostly to fit them to the occasion, as in the elegiac passage mentioned above as well as in passages of a more mystical quality, as when al-Ḥallāj or al-Shibli talk about mystical experience, etc.[13] But when the passage is to be uttered in a

matter of fact way, as for example when the judges are arguing,[14] the simplest, most direct and most discursive language is used. ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr's manipulation of tone is also apt and usually fits the context of the passage. There is a great subjugation of the oratorical tone, and in the mystical passages, there is a devotional tone of great effect.

Free verse as it is employed in this play proves itself to be a suitable medium for dramatic poetry, and it is probably correct to say that the rajaz[15] and mutadārak are the two best metres for this medium. Al-mutadārak in fact was the metre employed by the first experimentalist in free verse plays in the forties, ʿAli Aḥmad Bākathīr, discussed above.[16]

Not all the contemporary Arab poets writing in free verse seem to have been able to achieve the kind of rhythm, tone and language which promise success if they should attempt dramatic poetry. One can hardly imagine al-Sayyāb, for example, succeeding in this, because of the high and forceful musical quality of his poetry. The same would apply to Khalīl Ḥāwi, to give just another example. One poet, Nizār Qabbāni, has a great capacity for manipulating tone, rhythm and a language at once simple, effective and contemporaneous. From the point of view of these elements, one may say that he would be promising as a writer of dramatic verse.

Footnotes

1. See above, p.109.

2. See A.J. Arberry's discussion of Shauqi's dramatic verse, "Two Modern Egyptian Poets", Aspects of Islamic Civilization, pp.369-77; he recognises the "fine poetic feeling which Shauqi... exhibits", p.370 and describes Shauqi's kind of drama as "lyrical", p.369. Discussing Shauqi's play, Majnūn Layla, he praises the "naturalness of the dialogue", p.370, and gives examples rendered in English. This naturalness, however, is only true of the English translation. In Arabic, this is fatally hampered by the two hemistich verse. On Shauqi's plays, see also Mandūr, Masraḥiyyāt Shauqi, Cairo, 1956; and M.H. Shaukat, Al-Fann al-Masrḥi fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth, Cairo, 1963, pp.58-131, and Al-Masraḥiyyah fī Shi'r Shauqi.

3. The Music of Poetry, pp.20-1.

4. On this Mandūr says, "I can find in each play by the poet Abāẓah some expressions on which I can base my accusation that he is unnecessarily pedantic...", Qaḍāyā Jadīdah fī Adabinā 'l-Ḥadīth, p.32. See also Mandūr's book on him, Masraḥyyāt 'Azīz Abāẓah, Cairo, Institute of Higher Arabic Studies, 1958. Abāẓah has several verse plays.

5. See his appendix, Ma'sāt al-Ḥallāj, pp.207-8.

6. P.208, ibid.

7. See above pp.398-900.

8. See for a single example the interesting argument among the judges, pp.158-71.

9. Pp.9-10.

10. Ibid., pp.25-6.

11. For his use of al-mutaqārab see the speech of al-Ḥallāj on pp.171-8; and for his use of al-wāfir, see pp.63-71.

12. T.S. Eliot calls these passages 'poetry', i.e. as he explains, "the language at those dramatic moments when it reaches intensity", The Three Voices of Poetry, pp.9-10.

13. See p.29 et seq.

14. See footnote 8.

15. See the essay by the present writer, "Baḥr al-Rajaz fī Shi'rinā 'l-Mu'āṣir", Al-Ādāb, April, 1959, p.13 et seq., where this point is discussed.

16. See above pp.778-9.

SECTION 5 : IMAGERY

The history of poetry is a series of great changes in diction and imagery. "Every generation of poets has to rediscover afresh the peculiar nature of metaphor; for it is the life-blood of poetry."[1] This period was particularly adventurous in this aspect. Firstly, being more radical in poetic innovations than the preceding periods, it went even further in its discovery of the potential power and variety of images. Secondly, with the attack on rhetoric and the heightened statement, modern poetry had to depend more on imagery. Thirdly, the atmosphere was brimming with conflicting ideas and emotions and the poets experienced complex states of mind,[2] which could not really be expressed directly. Bowra asserts that the poet "so long as he is ready to explain himself,... the image does not play a part of first importance".[3] He is speaking of the modern European poetic experiment and describes a changed outlook on imagery, for the "poets need images to express the full complexity of their moods and use them more freely to convey the special thrill which they regard as their essential function".[4] Fourthly, it must be remembered that this European poetic experiment of which Bowra is speaking,[5] had a direct influence on the modern Arab poetic experiment, and its emphasis on imagery was transmitted to the Arab poets. Several points merit discussion here:

1. Avant-garde poets began using their images in a more modern sense. There was a keen avoidance of hackneyed and obsolete images and the contemporary environment and life found greater representation in this poetry than in the poetry of previous periods. A greater emphasis on originality was sought which led in some instances to deliberate inventions, not always successful.

2. Imagery in Classical poetry seemed to acquire a bad reputation at the hands of some critics. M. Nāṣif says that the "old poet usually composed

according to a predefined pattern which he realised instinctively".[6] In the old concept, he asserts, "imagery was a robe".[7] Comparing a poem by Shauqi as a representative of the old poetic method, with a modern poem, he concludes that in Shauqi's poem there is a pre-occupation with words and their music, simple emotion, and an apparent fluidity.[3] The images are easy and clear, and are scattered in the poem in order to conform to the unity of the single verse, so that the poet had to treat them independently[9] and place them in equal value.[10]

I. Ismā'īl describes Classical imagery as " حسّيّة ، حرفيّة ، شكليّة ".[11] By this he means first that it was the external exact form which was sought and secondly that the poet compared concrete objects with concrete sensory images. He gives as an example of a typical Classical image a verse by Ibn al-Mu'tazz in which the crescent is compared to a boat.[12] Ilī Ḥāwi emphasised this argument adding that the Classical image was an interpretation of a meaning and an idea and not an expression of a feeling and an experience. It was mental, mathematical, scientific, literal, dry, easily understood, but not capable of arousing emotion. It was not intuitive and did not express a psychological state. Giving a part of a verse from the "mu'allaqah" of Umru'u 'l-Qais describing his horse, " لها ايطلا ظبي وساقا نعامة ", he asks, "What value can such an image have?"[13] Iḥsān 'Abbās agrees with reserve that in most images of Classical poetry the paired subjects were concrete, suggesting that poets might have sought the image for its own sake. Sometimes, he adds, the poet used the image to illustrate an argument, which was a rather lame usage of the image.[14]

Most of the above descriptions of Classical imagery would agree with the concept (as expressed by T.E. Hulme) of accurate description, hardness and clarity of the Imagists,[15] which Ezra Pound described as "the noblest tradition of our craft [poetry]... It means contestation of fact. It presents. It does not comment... It is not a criticism of life."[16] However, "presentational accuracy" was not really a consistent feature of

Classical poetry, although it is found in good measure in it, as'Abbās stated. The connection of figurative language with emotion, well established in modern criticism,[17] is by no means absent from numerous Classical images. The dogmatic and all-conclusive attack especially by I. Ḥāwi and Ismā'īl on the Classical image as compared to the modern, is not justified.*

Modern imagery is, however, more consistently and fundamentally related to the psychological experience of the poet. Description for the sake of description is rare. The influence of the Imagists on poets like al-Sayyāb and al-Bayyāti has not succeeded in divorcing their imagery from its emotional connotations.[19] The great gain they had from the Imagists in their early poetry was in precision and in the capacity to delineate all aspects of an extended image, to present a picture vividly and concretely to the eye.[20]

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* Because of the highly selective and absolutist method of Adūnīs in his anthology of Classical poetry, Dīwān al-Shi'r al-'Arabi, it is a very good reference for some superior patterns. Among many examples are the following by 'Antarah:

يدعون عنتر والرماح كأنها اشطان بئر في لبان الادهم

and

ولما تجاذبنا السيوف وافرغت ثياب المنايا كنت اول لابس

and by Qiss bin Sā'idat al-Iyādi's on the sun:

تجرى على كبد السماء كما يجرى حمام الموت في النفس

and by Mālik bin Ḥarīm al-Hamadhāni, a moving description of a poor man:

يرى درجات المجد لا يستطيعها ويقعد وسط القوم لا يتكلم

and by Abū Sa'tarah al-Būlani:

اودهم ودا إذا خامر الحشا اضاء على الاضلاع والليل دامس

Then Tamīm bin Muqbil's most beautiful verse reflecting an existentialist attitude:

ما اطيب العيش لو ان الفتى حجر تنبو الحوادث عنه وهو ملموم

The emotional effectiveness of 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Ḥassān's verse:

كأن فجاج الارض حلقة خاتم علي فما تزداد طولا ولا عرضا

and this lovely use of the image by Ta'abbaṭa Sharra:

إذا خاط عينيه كرى النوم لم يزل له كالئ من قلب شيحان فاتك

and this lovely use of the image by Ta'abbaṭa Sharra: the absurd:

كأن فجاج الارض حلقة خاتم علي فما تزداد طولا ولا عرضا

إذا خاط عينيه كرى النوم لم يزل له كالئ من قلب شيحان فاتك

3. Change in the Nature of the Image: the Real Adventure:
a. The Extended image.

Modern poetry employs long images that might even spread over the whole poem. Ḥāwi's poem, "Al-Baḥḥār wa 'l-Darwīsh"[21] is an interesting example of this, the long poem revolving on the two opposing personalities of the greedy and adventurous sailor and the lethargic dervish. The poems which employ myth are particularly prone to use long continuing images supported all the way by many short metaphors, symbols, and sometimes similes. The use of symbols also encourages the creation of images sustained over a considerable length, because they enrich the picture by supplying a wealth of connective associations.[22]

b. The Metaphor.

No figure of speech has been more discussed either by Classical Arab critics or by modern Western writers as much as metaphor. In this chapter only a few relevant points can be discussed. The important thing is to show to what extent metaphorical competence was achieved. Metaphor is defined as a figure of speech involving two operative terms, in which the "comparison is implicit in the actual structure of imagery".[23] It is used for adornment, liveliness, elucidation or agreeable mystification.[24] The metaphorical relation is expressed by such words as "unification", "identity" and "fusion".[25] G. Whalley elucidates this:

> Metaphor is the means by which feelings can be fused without losing their individual clarity... the fundamental mode for transmuting feelings into words... the process by which the internal relationships peculiar to poetry are established.[26]

However, despite the fact that several critics connect the creation of the image with highly aroused emotional states, the validity of such a claim cannot be established. Descriptive poetry, which employs a great number of images, is not necessarily passionate. Many examples can be cited of descriptive poems which, though rich in images, are lacking in passionate appeal. One of the best descriptive poems in Arabic, which is highly metaphorical is Nāzik al-Malā'ikah's "Ughniyah li 'l-Qamar",[27] which,

despite its beauty and effectiveness, is not a passionate poem although it reflects the poetess's aesthetic ecstacy. George Rylands, discussing this point, comments on the statement of Longinus that "The proper time to use metaphors is when the emotions roll like a torrent" by asserting that Longinus here was talking of oratory and his words apply to prose. But poetry, he asserts, is "most simple when most terrible".[28] In fact, the two ideas are valid in the poetic experience. The same poet might write highly emotional poems in either style. Al-Sayyāb, whose poetry in Unshūdat al-Maṭar is greatly dependent on metaphor and other figures of speech, uses fewer images in some of his later and more tragic poetry. Writing a poem entitled "Al-Waṣiyyah", meant to convey his last wishes, he resorts to the most simple and direct statement when he arrives at the gist of the poem:

اقبال يا زوجتي الحبيبة
لا تعذليني ، ما المنايا في يدى
ولست ، لو نجوت ، بالمخلّد
كوني لغيلان رضى وطيبـــــة [29]

It is not the aim of this chapter to go into great theorizations on the nature of metaphor. A long history of theorization on this in both Arab and Western writers would involve us in long arguments, out of scope of this work. What is essential for this study is to try to assess the extent and importance of the metaphorical adventure of poets in this period. This can be better understood if the kind of inner liberation of the poet is assessed. Critics and poets rightly speak of spontaneity, but spontaneity is a relevant term. It is strangely and paradoxically pre-conditioned. A Romantic poet might be spontaneous, but there are complete realms of experience which he will not touch. Some inner taboo would check him, surreptitiously. Poets are ruled by modes and fashions. Born to an epoch, they seem to voice its general spirit, and their spontaneity, springing from a subconscious affinity with the spirit of their epoch, shows itself only within what is expected from the point of view of that

epoch. This is speaking very generally. Some artists will always contradict a general rule, but these original contradictions do not disprove a general statement.

In the present period, the most important thing that has happened to the poets is the great liberation they acquired towards their experiencing of the world. The old poetic taboos on experience tumbled down. Experiences denied to the Romantics in their quest of the Infinite and their resolution of all things into a general harmony',[30] and to the Symbolists in their quest of the Ideal and the Beautiful (both exclusive outlooks omitting unpleasant or discordant impulses) were now open to the modern poets. They acquired a free access to all realms of experience and emotion. It is according to the depth of the inner (intellectual and emotional) liberation of the poet that the subconscious and the conscious form their metaphorical creations. This is a very important point, because it explains to us the reason why the poets of some generation use their images in more restricted ways than do the poets of another. Existant poetic conventions control and direct poetic creativity more than one would like to believe, so that the poetic fashion in vogue seems to be apprehended instinctively by the poets of a certain generation. This is intricately connected with the artistic needs of poetry at a given time, but it remains a situation with prescribed frontiers.

The liberation of the poetic experience opened the way to all kinds of metaphoric adventure. Poetry, in its better examples became, to borrow a sentence from R.A. Foakes, "'inclusive poetry', which offered an experience in its entirity, complex and full of contradictions".[31] The field of imagery became richer, admitting a wealth of new varieties of comparison. There was born a new audacity which made it possible for poets to exploit the metaphorical power latent in all objects. Being open to all life, their images sprang from the new freedom of the poetic creativity to co-ordinate all of life's objects and experiences. As a

principle, this gives rise to contradictions expressed in paradox and irony.

In its strictest sense, paradox is "a statement which seems untrue but proves valid upon close inspection".[32] When poetry prefers the simplest, clearest and most direct statement, paradox is less easily resorted to, although Cleanth Brooks tried to show that "the truth which the poet utters can be approached only in terms of paradox".[33] However, Brooks's examination of the several facets of paradox is illuminating. For example, he shows how paradox need not be verbal. A poem which can enlarge and modify dramatically our preconceived concept of things would be highly paradoxical too.[34]

Paradox is connected with wit, but in fact, it need not be witty always. It can consist of a tragic vision of the paradoxical things of life, seen as a unified whole. The following verses by al-Sayyāb are a good example:

35 بلا انتهاء — كالدم المراق ، كالجياع
كالحب ، كالاطفال ، كالموتى — هو المطر

This is from the famous "Unshūdat al-Maṭar", a poem pregnant with paradoxes which figure, not only in verbal expressions:

36 دفء الشتاء فيه وارتعاشة الخريف
والموت والميلاد والظلام والضياء

but also in its basic theme: the rain falling over a fertile valley full of starving people, death lurking in life-giving rain. This is the paradox of wonder or pathos, at its keenest.

Adūnīs resorts frequently to paradox. Some of his paradoxes are directly verbal: "آه يا نعمة الخيانة "[37], "يحلم ان يرقص في الهاوية"[38] (an ironical use of the paradox here), "وانا ذلك الاله الذي سيبارك ارض الجريمة"[39]. But some of his poetry is based on paradoxical situations or paradoxical arguments of interest, for example: his fusion of love and death:

40 الموت وجه شاعر او كلمة
مقدورة للارض
الموت حضن عاشق وتعتة
اني في عروقه قصيدة او نبض

In fact death as a symbol of change from stagnation to life, which is a recurring theme in his work, is frequently used in paradoxical form: "وقع في قلبك الموت فاستنيرى بالموت"[41] and: "اغني للموت، للفرح في الاشياء".[42] The examination of paradox in modern Arabic poetry would be an interesting and rewarding study. However, only a few more examples can be mentioned in this work. Some of Tawfīq Ṣāyigh's prose poetry is based on a paradoxical apprehension of experience. His poem, "Min al-A'māq Ṣarakhtu ilaik yā Maut" is a poignant example of an extended image based on the paradox of death and love, the journey of the poet towards death on the back of his mare is subtly fused with the love experience. The poems of his "Mu'allaqat Tawfīq Ṣāyigh", are also based on the paradoxical image of two swords, one in the hand of his mother, which protects him, and another in the hand of Kay, the woman he loves, which stabs him. The whole poem is an interesting example of paradox:

43 ١ سيفا النار لا يتعبـــان		٥ مريم القلب ومريم الجسد	
٢ يترنحـــان ولا يهويان		٦ مريم الاحزان ومريم الاحزان	
٣ من يد المريميـــن		٧ مريم الحب ومريم الحب	
٤			

Nāzik al-Malā'ikah employs the paradox of wit with skill: "احلامنا الساهدة"، "وما في حماقاتنا من جمال شذ وخصوبة"[44]، "محاسننا الفجة المستحيلة"، "عيوب جميلة" all verbal paradoxes; but such poems as "Al-Shakhṣ al-Thāni" and "Al-Zā'ir al-Ladhi lam Yaji'"[45] conform to the idea that a poem is paradoxical when it modifies dramatically our preconceived concepts of things. In these poems, the longing for the image of a lost lover stands in paradoxical contrast with the feeling of satisfaction that he never re-appeared, for by not so doing, he remained the same person; his re-appearance would have destroyed the image of continuity which the interruption of the relation could secure. There is more wit than pathos in these poems, but for Nāzik, whose natural inclination, one would have thought, was to have bewailed a lost lover (as she indeed does in other poems),[46] this is an

achievement. It is also an achievement for Arabic poetry at the time, with the rather dry humour, the quiet philosophizing, the matter of fact, intelligent tone, miraculously freed of traditional sentimentality which normally accompanied such themes in Arabic.

The process of metaphorical creation is one of continuous tension and illumination. Images in a well written poem recall others either in harmonious or paradoxical existence with them. But in a satisfactory poem, two conditions of metaphorical competence are required. Firstly, a thread of relatedness must always exist among the metaphors, even when they seem dissimilar and far apart. Secondly, the images in a poem must develop its theme or be relevant to its theme.[47] C.D. Lewis warns against images "milling around in a poetic vacuum [and being] self-absorbed".[48]

Another great change in the imagery of modern Arabic poetry was the new relationship between the paired subjects. This underwent a radical change with some poets. Adūnīs is undoubtedly the boldest adventurer in this realm. Other than the wealth of vocabulary which he exhibits, his images are unexpected and radically unusual. Often they are very strange:

احضن الميتين 49
الذين اخافوا من العشب كي يبعثوا في التراب
نملة او كتاب

This is not a mere aesthetic adventure informed by a tendency towards eccentricity. It is a courage to conquer for poetry realms of experience yet untouched in modern times, to subjugate, not mere words, but the very objects of life to the poetic experience, to find new figurative meaning in things hitherto regarded with indifferent eyes. Thus the use of the words 'bed' " سنهد سرير المدينة ",[50] trees "والشجر الطالع من اهداب ابنابحيرة للجرح",[51] and pitcher " وها هو الابريق مرثية او زهرة ".[52] A strangeness which has, as O. Barfield says, "an interior significance".[53] Like Rimbaud, Adūnīs seems to wish to alter the world by sheer violence of impact. He had absorbed modernity easily, drawing upon the tradition of Rimbaud, the creed of the Surealists and the practice of such modernists as

St. John Perse, combining with it a wealth of Classical diction. He was able to fuse this very complex aesthetic experience together with the complex psychological experience of a modern, highly cultured, extremely sensitive Arab, into visual and concrete imagery of great originality. From the Surrealists he adopted their love of adventure, their interest in dreams,* their constant protest, their intent on a rebellion destined to liberate the mind from conventionalism in art and life, their desire to discover a new world, and their particularly superior aim of unifying exterior reality with interior reality.[55] However, he differs from them in several points.[56] There is no automatism in his work which is not free either from aesthetic or from rational control. His abandoning himself to the spirit of imagination to shape the flow of his theme, which might seem to the superficial observer as purely Surrealistic, is only partially so. For although some of his images seem to be of a remarkable ignascent quality, there is a hard core of intellectual strength behind them:

" اتحرر ، اسجن اعضائي داخل اعضائي "[57], and:

دمية ،تدخل بغتة من النافذة ، تحمل الجدران الاربعة وتمشي
طفل يتدحرج على زمرد الشوك
يعلق اهدابه على الشجر كالمناديل
وفي الحجر يستريح [58]

There is a deliberate Surrealistic attempt here, but this is not sustained throughout his work which has a much more coherent outlook.

Dealing with abstract and sometimes mystical themes, his poetry is usually marvellously free of abstractions. All avant-garde poets indeed show a decided abhorrance of abstract images, or of the poetry of abstract statement, and seem unanimously to think in images, a decidedly modern trend. Adūnīs's sensuous handling of thought appeals to the eye,

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*The following is a good example:

نمت مرة ولم أكن متخما[54]
فرأيت صديقا يدخل ويخرج بين اصابع اقدامي
آخر يحل سوير حذائي ويلتف بها
ورأيت صديقا يذبحني

sometimes to the ear, sometimes to other organic sensations. The following beautiful image combines visual, auditory and kinesthetic imagery:

59 غضـــب الفســـرات ـــ
في ضفتيـــه حناجـــر
ابراج زلزلة ، ورعـــد ،
والموج احصنـة ...
رأيت الفجر مقصوص الذوابـة
والماء سنون الهدير يسيل محتضنا حرابـــه

One feels that the poet sometimes deliberately culls words of widely diverse imagery. They often appear in clusters of one kind.[60] The following use of organic word-images(i.e. awareness of heartbeat, pulse, breathing, etc.)[61] however, is highly pedantic:

62 اسماء الخنق والحرق واحتضار الماء والاجنحـــة
اسماء اللكاة ، اللهلهة ، اللكاث ، اللهوقة ، اللقـــوة ،
لُقيا اللُّقاء ، واللقس ولماث الموته

Adūnīs's fertility is prodigious but needs careful tending. He exploits all objects: body organs and other constituants:

63 حنجـــرة ، عظام ، اكتاف ، سرة ، عين ، خاصرة ، عضو ، فك سفلـــي ، رئـــة ، جسـد ، جلـد ، ثدى .

things: 64

حجر ، قلادة ، حربة ، وسادة ، سكين ، حراب ، رصاصة ، ستارة .

animals of all sorts:

65 ببغاء ، جرذان ، اغاني ، ضباع ، ثور ، جرادة ، نملـة ، حية ، ناقة ، تيـــس ، ثعبـان ، خراف ، فأر .

However, he can be abstract at times: "وكان موتي طائرا حوّم في خميلة الغرابـــة"[66] but on the whole abstract statement in his poetry, like in the poetry of Saint John Perse, by whom he is profoundly influenced, is "compressed and grudging...kept in leash".[67] The illogical connection between the paired subjects of his images are sometimes carried out too far, so that we have an image like this: " ورأيت قطعـة قطـة ... تحمـــل خنجـــرا "[68], inappropriately grotesque and far-fetched.

One of the most important things about the use of imagery in his poetry is that he might unhesitatingly pick up images which have no

immediate emotional connotations for the reader, depending more on the striking effect of their originality, strangeness and freshness. Such an image as the following does not awaken memories or emotional references; he is speaking here of his footsteps:

وتطوف الحنايا وتنقساد
مذهولة او تحسار
في ثنايا الخواصر في الجلد 69

Adūnīs does not seem to gain much from T.S. Eliot's famous concept of the 'objective correlative'. Eliot had defined it in the following terms:

> The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative';in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.[70]

F.O. Matthiessen finds that the importance of this concept is "in its apparent insistence on definiteness and particularity of language and situation".[71] Matthiessen mentions that Eliot had once said in a conversation that his images were:

> 'consciously concrete'; they correspond as closely as possible to something he has actually seen and remembered. But he also believes that if they are clearly rendered, they will stand for something larger than themselves; they will not depend for their apprehension upon any private reference, but will become 'unconsciously general'.[72]

The concept of the 'Objective Correlative' has not been found completely satisfactory by some critics in the West.[73] One can say here that it would depend a great deal on the poet's particular way of thinking and use of imagery. Al-Sayyāb is usually naturally prone to use images which, through their precision and close relation to experience, can evoke immediately in the reader, equivalent emotions. But al-Sayyāb is primarily a student of English literature and one of the great admirers of Eliot himself. Adūnīs has drawn his refreshment from French modern sources, highly engrossed and influenced by Symbolism and Surrealism. He is further an admirer of Perse's method. If one remembers that the greatest influence on modern English poetry and on Eliot himself was

the doctrine of Imagism with its insistence on concreteness and precision, while that French modernism is greatly formed and influenced by the rejection of logical clarity by the Surrealists, one will realise how diverse are the influences which have marked the modern Arab poets. Adūnīs's presentation has around it, as Watt says about Perse, "an aura of uncertainty".[74] K. Cornell describes the modernism of imagery in the poetry of Perse and other similar French poets in terms closely applicable to Adūnīs:

> The image tends to become isolated, the series of images, unrelated. The demand on the reader's imagination is greatly increased, for it is no longer a question of a selection of related notations, but rather juxtapositions created by the poetic mind, drawn from varied times and places in the writer's mental or physical experience. Critics were led to make comparisons with moving-picture techniques, or even a series of camera "shots".[75]

The following passage by Adūnīs exemplifies this description:

ودخلت فيّ طقس الخليقة فيّ
رحم المياه وعذرة الشجر [76]
فرأيت اشجارا تراودني
ورأيت بين غصونها غرفا
واسرة وكوى تعاندني

An "original coiner of striking images, rare, remote, fastuous" as Henri Peyre said of Perse.[77] But although his images are hard to understand and visualise sometimes, there is usually an emotional thread which binds them and they can be interpreted in most cases. They are not anarchic and do not "lack the unifying force" which C.D. Lewis spoke about; i.e. they are not what he describes as a "heap of broken images",[73] except rarely.

Is it because of the strangeness and rarified quality of his images that Adūnīs's poetry does not always have that immediate link with reality which gives, as Matthiessen describes, the "dramatic effect" of a poem?[79] One doubts this, because, even in poems where one can fully understand the full implications of the images, the sense of non-reality persists. This is due, one suspects, to a few reasons some of which Jabrā realised in a long essay which will be discussed in the next section on obliquities. But

a major reason is the fact that much of Adūnīs's poetry lacks compassion and tenderness. His tone, it has been discussed above, is sombre. Man's suffering is rejected by him, one feels, more from an ideal abhorrence of injustice than as the result of full empathy. It is his idealisation of the concept more than his reverence for the object. He is mostly either dealing with ideas, or bemoaning his own suffering. It can be argued that all poets bemoan their own suffering, and that it should not be, therefore, a cause of alineation from their poetry. But Adūnīs's self-centred suffering slightly misses the final clenching with the reader's own experience of life, and remains somehow isolated. This is due, one feels, to his lack of that captivating personal candour which al-Sayyāb reveals only too well, and to his apparent fascination with self which arrives at what Jabrā termed an "enormous narcissism". Regret, self-reproach, self-disillusionment, the feeling of one's responsibility and one's participation in the general guilt are missing. This is hardly ever a poetry of confession. It is a picture of a contemporary inferno in which the poet is either the innocent proud victim or the judge that indicts. When, in occasional poems, Adūnīs shows tenderness, he is immediately captivating:

81
١ ماذا انا ، ماذا ؟ أسنبلة
٢ تبكـــي لقبّرة
٣ ماتت وراء الثلج والسبرد
٤ ماتت ولـم تكشف رسائلهـا
٥ عني ولم تكتب الى احـــد
٦ وسألتها ورأيت جثتهـــا
٧ مطروحة في اخر الزمـــن
٨ وصرخت ـــ "يا صمت الجليد انا
٩ وطن لغربتهـــا
١٠ وانا الغريب وتبرها وطنـــي "

.....

Al-Sayyāb is a master of the metaphor. His treatment is usually sure and his images strike with immediate effect:

82 وفي ابد من الاصغاء بين الرعـد والرعـــد
سمعنا ، لا حفيف النخل تحت العارض السحّاح
او ما وشوشته الريح حيث ابتلت الاد واح
ولكن خفقة الاقدام والايـدى
وكركرة "وآه" صغيرة تبضت بيناها
على قمر يرفرف كالفراشة ، او على نجمة

Less adventurous than Adūnīs, he remains highly creative, and the pictures he delineates leave a clear, vivid and often unforgettable impression. Al-Sayyāb's immensely rich world of poetry was created within the narrow limitations of a life restricted by ill health, poverty, futile political struggle[83] and unrequited loves.[84] Yet his poetry was able to convey a message of love which could not be clouded by the political hatred of a world full of spiritual hunger, sterility and oppression. In the rainless city, ruled by mercillous gods with stone eyes:

85 عيونكم الحجـــار نحسها تنداح في العتمـــــة

he secures the most heart catching image when he describes the victims as the virgins of Babylon:

86 عذارانـــا حزانـى ذاهلات حـــول عشتـــار
يغيض الماء شيئا بعد شيء من محياهـــــــا

There is nothing of the self-assertive tone which weighs heavily on the poetry of Adūnīs and Ḥāwi, directing the attention to the poet as hero, redeemer, sufferer for mankind and a very central person: (" انا الدهـــر والطريـــق "[87] Adūnīs, "وسوف يأتي زمن احتضن الارض واجلو صدرها وامسح الحدزق"[88] Ḥāwi). In the poetry of al-Sayyāb, we have, rather, the personality of a man who feels the suffering of others and comes out to meet it with love and compassion and a foreknowledge of his own naturally limited role. Here, to be a redeemer is only the expression of an inner wish to share a common endeavour:

89 اود لو غرقت في دمي الى القـــرار
لاحمل الحب مع البشـــر
وابعث الحياة ان موتي انتصـــار ٠

A spirit of perfect personal candour:" كيف امشي ، خطاي مزقها الداء ٠ كأنـي تعود ملح يسير"[90], and great tenderness informs many of his images; here, he is paying tribute to Federico Garcia Lorca:

91
١ شراعه الاخضر كالربيع
٢ الاحمر الخضيب من نجيع
٣ كأنه زورق طفل مزق الكتاب
٤ يملأ مما فيه بالزوارق النهر
٥ كأنه شراع كولمبس في العباب
٦ كأنه القدر

The interplay on paradoxical images here is permeated with a tenderness that tones down the witty appositions. Lorca's influence on his poetry is seen in several elements, but is more subtle than that of Edith Sitwell by whom the poet was profoundly and irrevocably influenced. Lorca gave him several of his images, of which the interplay of colour, seen in the last example is only one motif. Another example of Lorca's influence on his imagery is his use of the image of lost, imaginary bells ringing in the poet's consciousness, as we read in the glorious overture to a famous poem, "Al-Nahr wa 'l-Maut":

92

بويب ... بويب
اجراس برج ضاع في قرارة البحر

and from the same poem :

اجراس موتى في عروقي ترعش الرنين

reminiscent of Lorca's use of the same image:

93

My heart of silk
Is full of light,
Of lost bells,
Of lilies and bees.

The variation between extreme violence and great tenderness is also a characteristic of both poets, and it is from this natural affinity with the violence and the fragility of life that much of their poetry stems.* Images of violence in al-Sayyāb's poetry and the sensation of 'blood' as the warm fountain from which life springs and whose flow is a sign of a violent, often unjust death, brings back also Lorca's sensitivity to blood

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* Several other affinities between the two poets exist. Other than their common tenderness, there is their yearning for the primitive and for the things of nature, their spontaneous feeling of the constant presence of death in human life,[94] their hatred of mechanised, industrialised society (exemplified by Lorca in his poems Poet in New York, and by al-Sayyāb in his hatred of the City and his persistent, unquencheable longing for the innocence of village life for which his own village, Jaikūr, stands as an arche-symbol)[95], and finally the fact that in each of them, to use Bowra's words on Lorca, "poetry was really poetry and nothing else",[96] remaining vividly effective and not "thinned by intellectual analysis" or "a reference to artificial categories of thought".[97]

in the same context:

93
..... وانت يأخذك الدوار
من رؤية الدم وهو ينزف ثم يركد ، فالغبار
من تحته كفم الرضيع له اختلاج وانتشار

Other images of violence are many, among which is the poet's constant reference to bullets: " والريح رصاص "[99] (and so is the morning, and the night). The poignancy of his actual feeling of violence is felt most when, as he lies sleepless, listening in his conscience to the suffering of humanity and to his own death bells ringing in his veins, he yearns for a bullet to pierce the depths of his chest:

100 فيدلهم في دمي حنين
الى رصاصة يشق ثلجها الزؤام
اعماق صدري كالجحيم يشعل العظام

A greater poet in his own language than Edith Sitwell was in hers, al-Sayyāb, nevertheless, kept a sustained fascination with her work. Her visions of a "levelled, devastated world that lies before modern children .../a world that/ has returned to a state of a primeval chaos"[101] left a deep impact on him. In his strange poem, "Min Ru'yā Fūkai", he adopted her image of the Babioun, a monstrous ape which becomes the foster-mother to the orphaned human child and lives with it at the bottom of the sea where it sings to it a "blood-curdling lullaby".[102] Images from Sitwell slipped into al-Sayyāb's poetry, often repeating themselves: the rain, the silhouettes of children against a harsh and dangerous world,[103] the treacherous face of Judas: "Under the Judas-coloured sun"[104]:

فيها يهوذا احمر الثياب
105 يسلط الكلاب
على صدور اخوتي الصغار .....

Her Cain: "Red edged by the sun like Cain":[106]

107 يولد قابيل لكي ينتزع الحياة
من رحم الارض ومن منابع المياه
فيظلم الغد

and above all the steel bird:

But steel wings fan thee to thy rest,[108]

which al-Sayyāb used in the same sense:

ما زال طائر الحديد يذرع السماء . [109]

Sitwell's rain is not identical with al-Sayyāb's. In her poem "Still Falls the Rain", which C.M. Bowra thinks "has claims to be the most profound and most moving poem yet written in the English language about the war",[110] rain is an image of destruction and death, coming from the sky. But al-Sayyāb did not adopt this directly inverted image (despite the fact that it has seeds in Islamic culture " حجارة من سجّيل ", (the Quranic phrase) but regarded rain and water as basically a source of life and fertility; here he addresses Jamīlah bū Ḥairad, the Algerian heroine, " عشتار ... لم تروها الأمطار ما رويت "[111] and talking in the words of Christ, "قلبي الماء ، قلبي هو السبيل".[112] Another example is " لويفجر الرعود والبروق والمطر ، ويطلق السيول "[113] and the redeeming rain in the following: [114]

على رعشات ماء ، قطرة همست بنا نسمة
لنعلم ان بابل سوف تغسل من خطاياها

In two of his best poems, "Unshūdat al-Maṭar" and "Madīnah bilā Maṭar" the rain is ironically denied to those who need it most. Only rarely does he find rain itself a source of menace as does Sitwell, " ... من ... ؟ خبأ الوباء في المطر ".[115] This extract is from "Madīnāt al-Sandabād", a poem greatly informed by Sitwell's poetry, especially her poem, "Still Falls the Rain". On the whole, al-Sayyāb's image of rain is firmly rooted in the Arab traditional image of rain which the poet wishes to water on arid land, a grave, a forsaken spot where the beloved used to live, etc., but in his poetry, it often carries within itself the paradox of sterility and fertility, of death and love, of poverty and plenty as is perfectly exemplified in his beautiful poem, "Unshūdat al-Maṭar".

T.S. Eliot's influence on al-Sayyāb is more subtle than that of Sitwell but is also important. We cannot follow up here the details of

this influence but two examples should be sufficient. Al-Sayyāb's image of the human voice raised in futile protest as dry and sandy "اصيح — حتى تئن القبور — من رجع صوتي وخور مل وريح"[116] is reminiscent of Eliot's description in "The Hollow Men" where he says:

> Our dried voices, when 117
> We whisper together
> Are quiet and meaningless
> As wind in dry grass.

Again, al-Sayyāb's repetition of the word "maṭar" in "Unshūdat al-Maṭar" might have been inspired by Eliot's verses:

> But sound of water over a rock 118
> where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees
> drip drop drip drop drop drop drop

Al-Sayyāb is an authentic poet, but he is full of literary echoes.

Al-Sayyāb never outlived the details of his childhood and early youth. In this he is very different from such poets as Adūnīs, al-Khāl and Ḥāwi, who seem to have been born into adulthood with hardly any trace of those intuitive discoveries of childhood days which give life its first true and pure experience. Al-Sayyāb's poetry is vivid with scenes from those early days, their thrill,[119] and their deep agony brought about by the death of his mother. This last memory was destined to haunt him forever, and is even more heart-rending than the tragic fact of his fatal illness and his slow and horrified waiting for death. The exact experience of a child in such circumstances is recreated here most vividly:

> كأن طفلا بات يهذى قبل ان ينام : 120
> بأن امه — التي افاق منذ عام
> فلم يجدها ، ثم حين لجّ في السؤال
> قالوا له : "بعد غد تعـــود" —
> لا بد ان تعـــود
> وان تهامس الرفاق انها هنـــاك
> في جانب التل تنام نومة اللحـود
> تسفّ من ترابها وتشـرب المطـــر

and in this kind of experience, he stands independent of influences.

The poignancy and dramatic reality* of his images as shown in the last example are found in many poems. In the following image one can almost see and hear the couple walking along the bleak night road:

122 ولا وصلتك يا اقبال في ليلة رعد ورياح وقتام
حاملا فانوسي الخفاق تمتد الظلال
منه او تقصر ، اذ يرعش في ذاك السكون
ذلك الصمت سوى قعقعة الرعد ، سوى خفق الخطى بين التلال
وحفيف الريح في ثوبك ، او وسوسة الليل مشى بيمين الغصون

His capacity to give concrete forms to feelings is often marvellous:

123 حجار ندائي ، وصخر نفسي
ورجلاى ريح تجوب القفار

and this:

124 ويفساى : لا مخلب للصراع فاسعى بها في دروب المدينة
ولا قبضة لابتعاث الحياة من الطين ...
لكنها محض طينة

both signifying a feeling of helplessness and futility. In his poetry, there is, moreover, an intimacy with natural objects which gives them a kind of human significance. A secret sense of delight with nature, is reminiscent of Lorca,[125] but unlike him, is haunted by a sense of personal tragedy. His use of auditory images has been mentioned in the section on diction: the falling of rippling water, the rain showers, the lapping of waves, shouts, children's feet, bullets sounding in the night, and the poet's voice from a big living grave shouting against the odds of death. A silent cry resounds all the time, a continuous presence of the voices of violence and treachery against the soothing effect of the poet's gentle nature, and always the children's feet: "خفاف الخطى يعبرون الدروب بلا غاية"[126]

.....

Khalīl Ḥāwi thinks in images, leaning mostly on metaphors and symbols. He is greatly capable of producing vivid, precise, images: "نحش السكارى"[127]

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* Matthiessen's definition of the dramatic element in poetry is to the point: "The dramatic element in poetry lies in its power to communicate a sense of real life, a sense of the immediate present - that is, of the full quality of a moment as it is actually felt to consist... This ability to portray the very character of life is rare since it depends upon a firm grasp of experience, and thus demands from the poet a unified sensibility, a capacity of feeling that can closely interweave emotion and thought."[121]

(the prostitute), " ذئاب الدرب "[128] (men seeking pleasure in the night), " انحلت شباكا من خيوط العنكبوت "[129] (nerves breaking), " كفّاك من صخر "[130], " خفّاش مذهّب "[131], " مصاطر الكبريت "[132], (tradition, superstition) and this famous image:

تولد الفكرة في السوق بغيّا [133]
ثم تقضي العمر في لفق البكارة

Here he describes poignantly the poet who solicits the pleasure of the 'great' for money:

لم يزل شاعرهم ينسل من جحر [134]
لجحر خلف دينار صغير

the image of a mouse here is subtly portrayed but is spoiled a little when, two lines later, he mentions " صرير الفأر " explicitely. In such examples, he shows true metaphorical competence, but he fails sometimes in this and we have such images as " ضباب وسخ مهترئ الوجه "[135] and " العفن المطمور في الظلال ".[136]

Like Adūnīs, his poetry is informed by ideas, and it is again the voice of the cultured intellectual[137] thinking and interpreting experience in terms of its equivalent in thought. Often, as in "Jinniyyatu 'l-Shāṭi'" and "La'āzar ʿĀm 1962", the poem is built on a central idea which is supported by fragments of actual experience and reinforced by strong emotions which the poet is capable of calling forth. It is indeed to the poet's credit that he is able, despite this basis to most of his poems, to portray a spirit torn with anguish and anxiety. But the reader is constantly aware of the poet talking at high level of consciousness, and is haunted by the feeling that this poetry does not portray, in fact cannot be portraying life as it is really lived, but a certain pre-meditated attitude which has worked its way to the poet's spiritual experience. This is especially so in his two last diwans, Al-Nāy wa 'l-Rīḥ and Bayādir al-Jūʿ.

But the greatest drawback in his imagery is his frequent use of excessively repellent images, described and illustrated above.[138] He hoards his poems with them, finding endless metaphors to convey the

meanings of decay, corruption and revulsion. The result is a poetry usually highstrung, sometimes even raving:

139 اخاف من كبريـــت صاعقـــــــة
يفجـر فيهما ضحـك الجنـــــون

and

140 وربما انشقّ ضـوء الصمت عن شمس بلا ضوء
وحمّى انجم محمرة يغزلها الجنون
وربما توجك الجنـون

There is nothing wrong with fury in poetry, but in Ḥāwi's poetry it is excessive. This is a sorry defect, which can immediately alienate a reader who might accept it in one poem but, haunted with it in whole diwans, feels inadequate to cope with it, not only emotionally and aesthetically, but also intellectually. In fact, this defect, enhanced greatly by a breathless, avalanching music, might divert attention from other images which he draws pulsating with life: "اتقن الدوخـة من خصـر لخصـر",[141] an image at once ironical, concise and of great precision. The following, describing the feminine body is also vividly interesting. Stemming directly from folklore, it has an immediate effect:

142 النحنع السبرى يمرح في مطاوى السفـح
والريحان ادغال باوديتي يهـــــــج

.....

The real innovation in the field of imagery which al-Bayyāti helped to establish was the use of the extended image which I. 'Abbās called "The long and broad image". A broad image is made up of several units or images depicted horizontally so that one has the picture of a whole setting stretched out before him, full of action, little scenes and noises. Some of the best examples of this are his poems, "Sūq al-Qaryah" and "Al-Ḥadīqah al-Mahjūrah".[143] This kind of imagery was adopted by other poets such as Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr.[144] Al-Bayyāti himself was probably influenced in this by al-Sayyāb's poem, "Fi 'l-Sūq al-Qadīm", written in 1948.[145] Al-Bayyāti's technique, however, is superior to that of al-Sayyāb in this particular poem, and with regard to imagery, more of an adventure, al-Sayyāb turning

his poem into a rather Romantic expression of a forlorn individual in a strange place.

The long image is a form of extended image in which a character recounts his experience. It is usually a dynamic development in which a stream of consciousness is often at work. Among the poems employing an image of this kind are "Al-Affāq", "Al-Quraṣān" and "Al-Malja' al-'Ishrūn".[146]

Al-Bayyāti's images are emotionally informed. A misty kind of sadness lends them at once a suppleness and a greater familiarity, even when they are original. This basic emotional approach and involvement in life is the first separating line with the Imagists. Al-Bayyāti's extended images are always associated with a symbolic meaning which the poet has in mind, and are never delineated for their own sakes, a fact previously noted by I. 'Abbās.[147]

Al-Bayyāti's use of extended images, however, was not sustained over the years. He went back to the ordinary use of single images which string his poems. This is seen in the next volume he published, Al-Majd li 'l-Atfāl wa 'l-Zaitūn, (1956), as well as in the subsequent ones.[148] He had been exposed to the influence of several left-wing poets such as Nāẓim Ḥikmat, Eluard, Aragon, Pablo Neruda and Mayakofsky.[149] His debt to these poets cannot be assessed in a general study but the style which evolved remains his own with all its particular attributes and faults; a style which he was able, this time, to sustain over the years arriving at its full maturity in Sifr al-Faqr wa 'l-Thaurah.

A dogmatic belief in the glorious future of the Communist struggle informs his work and lends to his images a colour of either cheerfulness: "الليل تطرده قناديل العيون"[150] and:

وسروتنا تصنع المعجزات 151
عصافيرها بانتظار الغد

tragic anguish: 152

... وموتاك الصغار
بلا قبور، يأكلهم
أكبادهم، وعلى رصيفك يهجعون

and:

كأعن الموتى على طريق 153
بغداد
كانت امين الاطفال

or grim disdain:

كل القوافي اصبحت يا سيدى كالبغلة العرجاء 154

and

الصحف الصفراء في زماننا 155
.....
تطلق غربان الحروف السود
تحشو اوجه القراء بالتراب

As has been mentioned already, al-Bayyāti shows a greater mastery of imagery in Sifr al-Faqr wa 'l-Thaurah, stringing his images sometimes one after another with an eye, usually, at congruity and relevance. Here he describes the poet at a Classical court:

اصبحت في بلاطه حجر 156
ليلا بلا سحر
قيثارة مقطوعة الوتر
عباءة بالية ، مسمار
صفرا يدور في الفراغ ، آلة تدار

His poetic maturity in this volume shows itself beautifully in his poem, "Luzūmiyyah" which is one of the best poems al-Bayyāti wrote after Abārīq Muhashshamah. Informed by Abu 'l-'Alā' al-Ma'arri's more intricate approach, al-Bayyāti abandons his simple, direct and facile style and produces a paradoxical poem of high quality:

يا حافر البئر باوجاعه ودودا رحمته في السقاء 157
وجاعلا من كلماتي فما يصيح في الليل بلا اصدقاء
عهق وعمق فغدا ينتهي عذابك الأسود بعد اللقاء
خبزك مسموم فكل ما اشتهت نفسك ، والتهم بطول البقاء

But his images, although original at times, are rarely characterised by a particularly strong fancy, rarely strange and, like those of most modern poets, almost never elegant. Despite the general effectiveness of his poetry, brought about by its cumulative impact rather than by success and mastery in single poems, which is an attribute of al-Sayyāb, his style shows many defects, especially in his images, which are not always sure.[158] Examples of his inappropriate use of the image are the following: " ومخالب الموت تنثر خيوط العنكبوت "[159] One can hardly visualise claws strewing things nor can one see how a spider's web can be strewn.

Another bad image is this:

160 وروائح العشب الخبيث من السواقي المظلمـــات
تطفو على وجه الحديقة كالنبـــذ

What wine has to do in this acrid stagnant image, one fails to see. موعدنا الحشر فلا تداعبي قيثارة "الحـــــد"[161] he uses the ovely image as this "الجـــــد"[161] he uses the following inapt image:

162 أوصال جسمي أصبحت سمـــاد
في غابة الرمـــاد

where ashes cannot be entertained as an image of a forest. He is very fond of the image of ashes, and uses it often, usually more aptly: "حقول الرماد".[163]

Another important defect spoils the effectiveness of his images. This is his weak manipulation of rhythm. He seems to be controlled by the music of his poetry, almost like Ḥāwi, although he shows greater variety of rhythm and music. Writing on very serious, sometimes tragic themes, he is not always able to portray a convincing situation, mainly because of the exaggerated flow of his music. In a serious poem like "ʿAdhāb al-Ḥallāj"[164] the tragedy is diluted inartistically by the extreme fluidity of words which seem to slide away quickly, even breathlessly, and by the obstinate use of rhyme in elaborate fashion.[165]

These are some of the defects of al-Bayyāti's poetry, but he has several others.[166] They are probably brought about by his wish to convey a message of love, faith and courage to the greater number of readers, even to the masses, which left him lacking in sophisticated reverence towards a strong poetic technique. The many admirers who showered praise on him did not help the situation.[167] What makes his poetry, despite its many defects, likeable is its sincere, enthusiastic and often tender approach to life, its rare capacity to portray a picture of human reality in its simple, but paradoxical qualities of hope and despair, love and hate, pride and disdain, compassion and cruelty. Despite the poet's universal outlook as a Communist, his poetry shows a sustained

involvement with the true human condition existing in his own part of the world. Above all, it appeals to the reader by its impassioned tone of love and dedication:

الشمس في مدينتي
تشرق والاجراس
تقرع للابطال
فاستيقظي حبيبتي
فاننا احرار 163

In Tawfīq Ṣāyigh's images there is nothing wasted or superfluous. They probably lack the spontaneity of al-Sayyāb's, but they remain sure and organically placed in the poem. Ṣāyigh's prose poetry is based primarily on precise meaning which is elucidated by images that help to bring out its basic clarity. He often follows up an extended image[169] much as al-Bayyāti does in Abārīq Muhashshamah, although there does not seem to be any mutual influence between them. In an essay on Al-Qasīdah Kāf the present writer described the nature of Ṣāyigh's images as follows:

> The poem is usually a chain of concrete and highly accurate pictures referring to abstract meanings or hidden feelings which the reader would not have been able to realise except through images. Often these...images, which resemble miniatures, are units in a complete [and extended] image which rules the poem... Images in Tawfīq's poetry surprise us with their originality. It is clear, [moreover], that this poet has an amazing consciousness of the world around him, for he does not take his images from the realm of abstract fancy, [but from life around];[170]

اركضي حيث طاب لك
ولا تقفي ان احمرّ ضوء 171

He is addressing his mare in the above example. In the following, he delineates a picture of life in a big city:

يا شوارع امتدي 172
. . . . . .
واحتضني تحت العصابيح
النصف مضاءة
عجائز يتمتمن جذلات مفجعات

and of modern life in this:

واعتليت صاروخا وئيدا لم يختبر بعد 173

Some of his images he takes from the world cultural heritage:[174]

ما لي اراك التففت بالعلم الابيض

and:

يخـــرز الدبـوس في الدمـــى

However, the hunting for originality becomes pure wit at times, as when he says: 175

دنيـــاك واسعـــة
. . . . . .
اتركـــا لـــي
ابلطها اذا شئت او افجرها زيوتـــا
امطمطها ان طـاب لي او اغرز ببالونها سمار سبـات

and: 176

هذا الكتـــاب الجسيم
صفحـات الارباح فيـــه عـــذارى
والمخاسر جزء تلـــو جـــزء

and: 177

كما تزغـــرد الخـــالات لمولـد صبي بعد تسع

which are images more appropriate to prose than to poetry.

Ṣāyigh must be remembered as a man of precission, wit and originality. Probably the taste for his prose poetry has to be an acquired one, but his particular approach and technique stand out in his work and even those who might not enjoy his writing should be able to recognize them. Much can be learned from his handling of images and from their precise congruity, for they are never vague or blurred. It is never safe to try to attempt an association of original talents with any particular school or tradition. The only general description one can give to Ṣāyigh's work is that it is more informed by the English modern tradition than by any other. His precision and definiteness of purpose show Eliot's pervasive influence which, however, is too subtle to admit a direct anology except with difficulty.

Ṣalāḥ ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr is capable of creating fresh and luminous images endowed with tenderness and vitality:

حزن تمـــرد في المدينـــــة 178
كاللص فـــي جـــوف السكينة
كالافحوان بلا فحيح

He pictures a Middle Eastern panorama, delineating various aspects of life in Egyptian cities and villages; the faces of people appear, and vividly live in the memory of the reader,[179] retaining their ethnic qualities: the tenderness, the ferocity, the special emotional experience:

انخلع القلب ، وولّى هاربـا بلا زمـام 180
وانكسرت قوادم الاحـــلام

However, his imagery is not always sure, and can be, if not blurred, at least incorrect: عيناه خنجران مسقيان بالسموم 181

where drinking is not appropriate to daggers; and this:

وهناك مركبة محطمة تدور على الطريق 182

where one cannot visualise a destroyed vehicle rotating. In the following his use of 'bent' for shirts is wrong:

قمصانهم محنيّة مصبوغة بنار دم 183

and the same applies to his use of 'hurl' for fissures:

هول انقضاض الشفوق 184

Such a misuse of words is not infrequent in his poetry. 'Abd al-Ṣabūr, like al-Bayyāti, has had many admirers, and it is his poetry which is first illustrated from and examined by Egyptian critics.[185] However, it is usually the positive achievements of this poetry that are discussed: the poet's sensitiveness, his appropriation of what he could of the cultural heritage of mankind, the vast panorama of life, the particular emotionalism, the power to bring the language of poetry to a conversational level, etc. The defects are not usually discussed. But the defects of 'Abd al-Ṣabūr's poetry are central and are often a fatal blemish.[186] A talented poet ought to be helped by his critics to achieve a better technique. However, in Ma'sāt al-Ḥallāj, his last experimental work, he shows greater maturity and mastery over his use of imagery.

Modern poets are always on the look out for new sources of imagery, studying all possible sources of inspiration and experience in order to discover different ways of expressing themselves. It is the "doom" of poets, as C.M. Bowra asserts, "that they must always create something new".[187] It has been shown above how real adventures have been attempted in the realm of imagery, and how overused images and obsolete language have been deliberately avoided by the better poets. One feels it will be impossible for Arab avant-garde poets writing now to abandon this quest for the new and fresh, and stop the adventure in the realm of language and

imagery. One can predict an even greater attempt towards an increased affinity with modern life and a firmer grasp on reality. However, the deliberate quest for new images and for a new way of forming them will certainly have its disadvantages. Many poets, one feels certain, will create images which have not been incorporated into their poetic experience, which will result in what C.D. Lewis describes as images starting from cold.[188] Many poets, moreover, in imitation of older original poets such as Adūnīs and Ḥāwi, will use the newly achieved audacity to invent images lacking in aptness, substance or evocative power. An increase in the trend confirmed by Ḥāwi of using excessively repellent images is already noticed and a chaos in image formation can already be detected in the rising generation of poets.[189]

.....

The Simile:

Simile[190] is defined as a "comparison of one thing with another explicitly announced by the word 'like' or 'as'".[191] Contemporary Arabic poetic criticism has greatly disqualified the use of the simile:

> Simile ("al-tashbīh") usually contradicts the nature of poetic experience, because the comparison found between two different phenomena is basically dependent on a logical process which proceeds from introductions to conclusions through thinking and realising and not through feeling and experiencing.[192]

Another critic describes the simile as being "exact and similar" to the object compared and "in exactness and similarity there exist clarity, emphasis and definiteness".[193]

The last description finds a parallel in Western writings:

> Simile, through its descriptive function readily leads to diffuseness and extension...a digression from metaphor in the direction of descriptive and logical consistency, from the specifically poetic mode to the discursive mode.[194]

In his study on heroic poetry, C.M. Bowra, however, sees in simile a device with which the poet is able to catch "those emotional and imaginative associations which lie beyond the reach of literal statement".[195] Even simple and short similes such as a shield is "like a tower", "are

immediately and to the point; they illuminate the situation for a moment".

However, simile can be seen to have a function which a metaphor does not have, for it is more precise and can be easily limited to one aspect of comparison which might be all that the poet wants to point out, as in the following passage by al-Sayyāb:

فتستفيـــق ملء روحـــي رعشـــة البكـــاء 197
ونشوة وحشيـــة تعانـــق الســـمـــــاء
كنشـــوة الطفل اذا خاف من القـــمـــر

this "provides a single common characteristic in the comparison",[198] the poet drawing attention here to one element of the identity. For it is apparent that the tremor which the poet feels is not identical with a child's tremulous experience except in its immensity, and the comparison has to be limited. In a metaphor, there is a greater fusion of identity. Another example of a limited identification is the following by Adūnīs: "المهاجر انطفأ كالقنديـــــل "[199] where only the aspect of an extinguished lamp is sought. The simile here is apt and completely self-sufficient.

Most avant-garde poets are sparing in similes. In this epoch metaphor, symbol and other obliquities have been raised far above simile. Khalīl Ḥāwi, an overconscious poet in his technique, fanatically avoids using similes.[200] He is helped in this by the fact that he is not satisfied with partial descriptions and always seems to aim at maximum qualification of the object treated. But similes are, after all, one figure of speech among several and there should be a greater enrichment of means if a poet could manipulate them with effect. They help to vary the style and texture of poetry. One way which often proves to be effective is to arrange them in clusters:

بلا انتهاء ـ كالدم المراق ، كالجيـــاع 201
كالحب ، كالاطفال ، كالموتى ـ هو المطـــر !

After a long passage devoid of any similes, al-Sayyāb suddenly hurls them

in a group. Here, they are not playing an explanatory role but an emotional one. They pass like flashes on the reader's mind, conjuring up the emotional relations which lie in their intrinsic meaning.[202] They cannot be regarded as diffusive or extensive but as a means of greatly condensing the emotion. The excellent Sayyābian paradox used in this passage gives it a special poignancy. However, remoteness, which is highly commendable in the use of single similes[203] such as this by Adūnīs: "أمس صدود بلا حياة ،كجسد الحصاة"[204] does not seem to be absolutely necessary in the use of accumulated similes. Bowra comments on the "unpretentiousness", the "simplicity", the "formulaic" and even the "conventional" nature of these accumulated similes. He adds that, nevertheless, "something is gained by their juxtaposition",[205] explaining this by saying that "Each simile makes its contribution, but the total result is more than the mere sum of them".[206] This total result, which he does not describe further, must be, one feels, the emotional impact produced by this clustering of similes. Since familiarity in imagery is richer in emotional associations,* this is easily understood:

لان من ذرا بلادنا ترقرق السلام
وناض من بطاحها محبة خضراء مثل نبتة الحقول
ورقة بيضاء كالازهار في الخميل
ورحمة زهراء
كقلب امهاتنا
كفرحنا بعيدنا
كالقطن حين يستنير لوزه جنى

207

'Abd al-Ṣabūr had used only one simile previously in his poem, then suddenly he produced this cluster of similes, most of which are familiar, ending, however, on a last original note: كالقطن حين يستنير لوزه جنى

One may conclude here that simile, although ordinarily less condensed and hence less poetical than other forms of imagery, has its own, special attributes which, when handled aptly and sparingly, can enrich and vary the texture and effect of a poem.

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* Modern imagery, says C.D. Lewis, is unfamiliar and therefore "meagre in emotional associations".[208]

Footnotes

1. G. Whalley, Poetic Process, p.144.
2. On the complexity of the modern experience, see C.M. Bowra, The Creative Experiment, London, 1949, pp.3-9, where he speaks of the Western experience.
3. Ibid.; Muṣṭafa Nāṣif repeats this explicitly without, however, referring to the original, Al-Sūrah al-Ādabiyyah, Cairo, 1958, p.217.
4. Loc.cit.
5. Ibid., pp.3-10.
6. Op.cit., p.188.
7. Ibid., p.190.
8. Ibid., p.198.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p.202; see also p.209 where he further emphasises the idea of independence of images.
11. Al-Adab wa Funūnuh , third edition, Cairo, 1965, pp.109-12.
12. Ibid., p.109.
13. "Al-Ṣūrah baina 'l-Shi'r al-Qadīm wa 'l-Shi'r al-Mu'āṣir", Al-Ādāb, February, 1960, pp.53-4.
14. Fann al-Shi'r, p.231.
15. See Speculations, p.132; 'Abbās noticed the similarity, too; see his analogy between the Imagists and Ibn al-Rūmi's descriptive poetry, 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyāti wa 'l-Shi'r al-'Irāqi 'l-Hadīth, Beirut, 1955, p.10.
16. As quoted by G. Hough, Image and Experience, London, 1960, p.13.
17. On this see below footnotes 26 and 28.
18. Beirut, 1964, pp.93, 93, 95, 96, 98, 202, 329, 56 and 57 respectively.
19. On al-Bayyāti in this context see 'Abbās, Al-Bayyāti, pp.9-20.
20. See al-Bayyāti's poem, "Sūq al-Qaryah", Abārīq Muhashshamah, pp.35-6; and al-Sayyāb's poem, "Fī 'l-Sūq al-Qadīm", Azhār wa Asāṭīr, pp.29-40.
21. Nahr al-Ramād, pp.11-9.
22. 'Abbās spoke of the long and broad picture in al-Bayyāti's poetry, see Al-Bayyāti, pp.42-51.
23. R. Skelton, The Poetic Pattern, p.93; see also p.102.
24. The Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, under METAPHOR.
25. Ibid.
26. Op.cit., pp.141-2.
27. Shajaratu 'l-Qamar, pp.77-83.
28. Quoted by him in Words and Poetry, p.37.
29. Al-Ma'bad al-Gharīq, p.161.
30. See for example T.E. Hulme's attack on the Infinite quality of Romantic poetry, Speculations, pp.114 et seq.
31. The Romantic Assertion, p.19.

32. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics under PARADOX.
33. "The Language of Paradox", in The Language of Poetry, ed. Allen Tate, Princeton, 1942, p.37; see also p.56.
34. Ibid., p.38.
35. "Unshūdat al-Maṭar", p.162.
36. Ibid., p.160.
37. From his poem, "Ākhir al-Samā'", Aghāni Mihyār, p.30.
38. From his poem, "Al-Khiyānah", ibid., p.121.
39. Ibid.
40. From his poem, "Janāzat Imra'ah", Al-Masrah wa 'l-Marāyā, p.8.
41. From his poem, "Ḥiwār", Kitāb al-Taḥawwulāt, p.161.
42. From his poem, "Al-Ughniyah", Aghāni Mihyār, p.107.
43. Mu'allaqat Tawfīq Ṣāyigh, Beirut, 1963.
44. From her poem, "Khiṣām", Shajaratu 'l-Qamar, pp.104-5.
45. Qarārat al-Maujah, pp.118-20.
46. See several poems, for example, in Shazāyā, "'Urūq Khāmidah", pp.49-51; "Al-Jurḥ al-Ghādib", pp.52-6; "Ajrās Saudā'", pp.89-92; "Nihāyat al-Sullam" pp.93-6; "Ghurabā'", pp.101-3; "Ramād", pp.158-62; "Janāzat al-Maraḥ", pp.132-4.
47. On this see C.D. Lewis, The Poetic Image, London, 1947, pp.71-80.
48. Ibid., p.120.
49. From his poem, "Faṣl al-Mawāqif", Kitāb al-Taḥawwulāt, p.231.
50. From his poem, "Al-Madīnah", Aghāni Mihyār, p.187.
51. From his poem, "Al-Jurḥ", ibid., p.44.
52. From his poem, "Mir'āt li 'l-Waqt", Al-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā, pp.41-2.
53. Poetic Diction, p.190.
54. From "Faṣl al-Mawāqif", p.219.
55. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, under SURREALISM.
56. On automatism see ibid.
57. From "Faṣl al-Mawāqif", p.215.
58. Ibid., p.225.
59. From his poem, "Al-Ghaḍab", Al-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā, p.52.
60. For examples of these see pp.94 and 99 of his poem, "Mir'āt li 'l-Tārīkh", ibid.
61. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, under IMAGERY.
62. From "Faṣl al-Mawāqif", p.220.
63. See Al-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā, pp.45, 46, 47, 43, 48, 51, 55, 56, 57, 65, 70 and 87 respectively.
64. See ibid., pp.65, 65, 65, 65, 65, 66, 66, 69 and 69 respectively.
65. See ibid., pp.50, 53, 53, 53, 56, 56, 56, 71, 71, 77, 83, 83 and 87 respectively.
66. From his poem, "Ṣaut min al-Mā'", ibid., p.130.

67. Harold H. Watts, "Anabase: the Endless Film", reprinted from the University of Toronto Quarterly, Vol.XIX, No.3, April, 1950, p.229.

68. From his poem, "Al-Samā' al-Thāminah"; Al-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā, p.165.

69. From his poem, "Lughatun li 'l-Masāfah", Aghāni Mihyār, p.94.

70. The Sacred Wood, London, 1928, p.100.

71. As paraphrased by the Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, under OBJECTIVE CORRELATIVE; see also F.O. Matthiessen, The Achievement of T.S. Eliot, third edition, a Galaxy Book, New York, 1959, pp.56-80 especially pp.56-67.

72. Ibid., p.63.

73. See the Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, loc.cit.

74. Watts, op.cit., p.228.

75. The Post-Symbolist Period, New Haven, 1958, p.152. Perse's influence on Adūnīs is seen in other things, too. It is possible that Adūnīs's basic image in his Al-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā of a mirror reflecting the poet's self and that of his age, was influenced by Perse's image of the same thing. In his speech of acceptance upon the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature (Stockholm, December 10th, 1960), Perse said, "It is for the poet, in his wholeness, to bear witness to the twofold vocation of man: to hold before the spirit a mirror more sensitive to his spiritual possibilities; to evoke in our century a vision of the human condition more worthy of man as he was created...", trans. W.H. Auden, New York, 1961, p.12.

76. From his poem, "Harabat Madīnatunā", Aghāni Mihyār, p.159.

77. Contemporary French Literature, New York, 1964, p.416.

78. The Poetic Image, pp.133-4.

79. Op.cit., p.67.

80. "Al-Tanāqudāt fi 'l-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā", p.125.

81. From "Harabat Madīnatunā", p.160; see also his lovely poem, "Mir'āh li Khālidah", Al-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā, pp.224-7.

82. From his poem, "Madīnah bilā Maṭar", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, pp.176-7.

83. His serialised articles, "Kuntu Shuyū'iyyan", published in Al-Sha'b newspaper, Baghdad, reflect this to some extent; see No.1441 of August 16th, 1959, et seq.; see also his lecture "Al-Iltizām wa 'l-Lā-Iltizām fi 'l-Adab al-'Arabi 'l-Hadīth".

ولكن .. كل من احببت قبلك ما احبونـــي
ولا عطفوا علىّ ، عشقت سبعا .....

ولكن

Shanāshīl, p.59; see also his poem, "Jaikūr Ummī" where he says:

ولا (هالتي) تلك • ام (وفية) ام (اتبال) •
says:

لم يبق لي سوى اسماء
(هـ حسن هوى مر كرعد في سمائي
لم يبق لي سوى اسماء
حسن هوى مر كرعد في سمائي
دون مـــاء

ibid., p.78.

85. From "Madīnah bilā Maṭar", p.173.

86. Ibid.

87. From his poem, "Jasad al-Ḥaṣāh", Al-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā, p.197.

88. From his poem, "Al-Sandabād fī Riḥlatihi 'l-Thāminah", Al-Nāy wa 'l-Rīḥ, p.108.

89. "Al-Nahr wa 'l-Maut", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.144.

90. From "Jaikūr Ummī", loc.cit.

91. From his poem, "Garcia Lorca", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, pp.27-8.

92. "Al-Nahr wa 'l-Maut", p.141.

93. Translated by Bowra, The Creative Experiment, p.193.

94. On Lorca's death theme, see Howard Young, The Victorious Experiment, Madison, Milwaukee, 1966, pp.156-60.

95. See al-Sayyāb's many poems on Jaikūr in Unshūdat al-Maṭar (e.g. "Marthiyyat Jaikūr", pp.93-8; "Tammūz Jaikūr", pp.99-102; his lovely poem, "Jaikūr wa 'l-Madīnah", pp.103-7; "Al-'Audah li Jaikūr", pp.108-15 etc.); in Shanāshīl, ("Jaikūr wa Ashjār al-Madīnah", pp.51-3; "Jaikūr Ummi", pp.77-80) etc.

96. The Creative Experiment, p.192.

97. Ibid., p.197.

98. From his poem, "Qāri' al-Dam", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.131; on Lorca, see Bowra, The Creative Experiment, pp.98-9.

99. From his poem, "Ru'yā fī 'Ām 1956", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.125; compare this with Lorca's use of the image of knives in his poetry as exemplified by Bowra, The Creative Experiment, pp.212-3.

100. From "Al-Nahr wa 'l-Maut", p.143.

101. C.M. Bowra, Edith Sitwell, Monaco, 1947, p.33.

102. Ibid.

103. See for example his long poem, "Al-Asliḥah wa 'l-Aṭfāl", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, pp.251-77.

104. From E. Sitwell's poem, "Lullaby", Selected Poems, a Penguin Book, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1952, p.33.

105. From his poem, "Madīnat al-Sandabād", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.158.

106. From Sitwell's poem, "Street Song", op.cit., p.35.

107. From "Madīnat al-Sandabād", p.156.

108. From Sitwell's poem, "Lullaby", op.cit., p.33.

109. From his poem, "Min Ru'yā Fūkai", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.48; he repeated it again in his poem, "Marthiyyat Jaikūr", ibid., p.93.

110. Edith Sitwell, p.35.

111. From his poem, "Ilā Jamīlah bū Ḥairad", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.73.

112. From his poem, "Al-Masīḥ ba'da 'l-Ṣalb", ibid., p.146.

113. From his poem, "Sarbarūs fī Bābil", ibid., p.169.

114. From his poem, "Madīnah bilā Maṭar", ibid., p.177.

115. From "Madinat al-Ṣadabād", ibid., p.156.

116. From his poem, "Risālah min Maqbarah", ibid., p.78.

117. The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950, New York, 1958, p.56; compare also Eliot's verses in "The Waste Land":

There is not even silence in the mountains
But dry sterile thunder without rain

ibid., p.47; with al-Sayyāb's verse: "سحائب مرعدات مبرقات دون امطار" in "Madīnah bilā Maṭar", p.173.

Al-Sayyāb seems to be also very much influenced by Eliot's following verses: (both examples are in direct statement)

Shape without form, shade without color,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;

Al-Sayyāb says:

نسغ ولا صـــــــوت
نطـق ولا صـــــــوت
ظـلـق ولا ســـــــلاد

"Al-ʿAudah li Jaikūr", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.111.

118. "The Waste Land", p.48.

119. See for example his interesting poem, "Shanāshīl Ibnat al-Jalabi", in Shanāshīl, pp.5-10 which is a reminiscence of a thrilling experience. In some other poets such as Tawfīq Ṣāyigh and Ṣalāḥ ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr thrilling memories of childhood also figure but are never haunting or persistent; see for a single example from each Ṣāyigh's poem, "Sīkūlūjiyyah Rijʿiyyah", Thalāthūn Qaṣīdah; and see ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr, pp.77-8 of his poem "Al-Mulku Lak", Al-Nās fī Bilādi.

120. "Unshūdat al-Maṭar", p.161.

121. Op.cit., pp.67-8.

122. From "Jaikūr Ummi", pp.79-80.

123. From his poem, "Liʿannī Gharīb", Al-Maʿbad al-Gharīq, p.124.

124. From his poem, "Jaikūr wa 'l-Madīnah", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.107.

125. See Young, op.cit., p.148 where he speaks of Lorca's "playfulness rooted in childhood thought /that/ finds expression in the little things of nature".

126. From his poem, "Yaqūlūna Taḥyā", Shanāshīl, p.66.

127. From his poem, "Naʿsh al-Sukārā", Nahr al-Ramād, p.41.

128. From his poem, "Jaḥīm Bārid", ibid., p.47.

129. Ibid., p.49.

130. From his poem, "Bilā ʿUnwān", ibid., p.53.

131. From his poem, "Fī Jauf al-Ḥūt", ibid., p.66.

132. From his poem, "ʿAudah ilā Sadūm", ibid., p.122.

133. From his poem, "Al-Majūs fī 'Urūbbā", ibid., p.114.

134. From "ʿAudah ilā Sadūm", p.123.

135. From his poem, " Wujūh al-Sandabād", Al-Nāy wa 'l-Rīḥ, p.64.

136. From his poem, " ʿInd al-Baṣṣārah", ibid., p.13.

137. See what critic Ilī Hāwi, the poet's brother, says on this, "Al-Maḍmūn al-Wujūdi fi 'l-Nāy wa 'l-Rīḥ", Al-Ādāb, April, 1961, p.19.

138. See above p.152; see also p.989.

139. From his poem, "Al-Kahf", Bayādir al-Jūʿ, p.12.

140. From his poem, " ʿInd al-Baṣṣārah", p.11.

141. From his poem, "Wujūh al-Sandabād", p.50.

142. From his poem, "Jinniyyatu 'l-Shāṭi'", Bayādir al-Jū', p.24.

143. Abārīq Muhashshamah, pp.35-6, and 93-5 respectively; see also other similar poems such as "Vīt Mīn", which is a cross section of life showing at the same moment the two aspects of a revolutionary and a stagnant type of life, ibid., pp.24-6; "Al-Qaryah al-Mal'ūnah", ibid., pp.58-60, etc.

144. See for example his poem "Hajama 'l-Tatār", Al-Nās fī Bilādi, pp.51-4 which, in its major part, is an example of a broad image depicting the scene of a defeat and an invasion.

145. Azhār wa Asāṭīr, pp.29-40.

146. Abārīq Muhashshamah, pp.30-2, 40-3 and 13-5 respectively.

147. Al-Bayyāti, pp.12-20.

148. Other diwans were Ash'ār fi 'l-Manfā, (Cairo, 1957); 'Ishrūn Qasīdah min Berlin, (Baghdad, 1959); Kalimāt lā Tamūt, (Beirut, 1960); Al-Nār wa 'l-Kalimāt, (Beirut, 1964) and Sifr al-Faqr wa 'l-Thaurah, (Beirut, 1965).

149. Al-Bayyāti translated poems from Nāẓim Ḥikmat and others in 1956, see Risālah ilā Nāẓim Ḥikmat, (Beirut, 1956), and with the help of Aḥmad Mursi he translated a book on Eluard, (Beirut, 1957) and another on Aragon (Beirut 1959).

150. From his poem "Al-'Audah", Al-Majd li 'l-Aṭfāl wa 'l-Zaitūn, p.13.

151. From his poem, "Qitār al-Shamāl", ibid., p.66.

152. From his poem, "Yaumiyyāt 'Arabi fī Isrā'īl, Ughniyah ilā Yāfā" ibid., p.6.

153. From his poem, "Al-Rabī' wa 'l-Aṭfāl", Ash'ār fi 'l-Manfā, p.15.

154. From his poem, "Ḥasrah fī Baghdād", Sifr al-Faqr, p.53.

155. From his poem, "Al-Ṣuḥuf al-Ṣafrā'", Al-Nār wa 'l-Kalimāt, p.115.

156. From his poem "Al-'Abā'ah wa 'l-Khanjar", Sifr al-Faqr, pp.45-6.

157. Ibid., p.62.

158. Jalīl Kamāl al-Dīn asserts the fact that al-Bayyāti is more careful of his content than of his form, see Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth wa Rūḥ al-'Aṣr, p.110; see also the discussion of 'Abbās of the defects of al-Bayyāti's image, Al-Bayyāti, pp.90-102.

159. From his poem, "Al-Ḥadīqah 'l-Mahjūrah", Abārīq Muhashshamah, p.93.

160. Ibid., p.95.

161. From his poem, "Ramād fi 'l-Rīḥ", Sifr al-Faqr, p.29.

162. Ibid.

163. From his poem, "Al-Arḍ al-Ṭayyibah", Al-Majd li 'l-Aṭfāl, p.55.

164. Sifr al-Faqr, pp.11-27.

165. Shukri ʿAyyād thinks that al-Bayyāti achieves majesty not tragedy in his poetry. He likes his music and praises it most highly, Tajārib fi 'l-Adab wa 'l-Naqd, Cairo, 1967, p.146. However, he notices that his images are not always clear and congruent, but, strangely, refers it to what he regards as a "Surrealistic element" in his poetry. He adds that al-Bayyāti, more than any other poet of his generation, arouses the problem of "understanding in poetry", p.147. This is surprising, because, compared with the poetry of most avant-garde poets writing outside Egypt, al-Bayyāti's poetry is simple and easily understood.

166. Many other defects occur in syntax, e.g. his wrong use of the proposition in the following: " إني لا أومن في غد الانسان،في نهر الحياة ", where "bi" instead of "fī" should have been used, "Amal", Al-Majd li 'l-Aṭfāl, p.47; and in construction, e.g. he has the habit of putting the "muḍāf" at the end of a line and the "muḍāf ilaihi" at the beginning of the next, which is a most inappropriate use of it:

يا أخـــت روحي ، يا غرامي ، يا نـــداء
شعبي واحلامي وميتي ، يا عبيـــر
غابات كردستـــان .....

"Risālat Ḥubb ilā Zaujati", ibid., p.35.

167. See for example two volumes of collected essays on him by several writers, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyāti, Rāʾid al-Shiʿr al-Ḥadīth, Damascus, 1958; and Maʾsāt al-Insān al-Muʿāṣir fī Shiʿr ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyāti, Cairo, 1966. I. ʿAbbās's book, Al-Bayyāti, mentioned above is a sober study of the poet and his original technique in Abārīq Muhashshamah. Having been written at such an early date of al-Bayyāti's experiment and of that of the new poetry, it helped to enhance greatly al-Bayyāti's prestige and fame.

168. From his poem, "14 Tammūz", Kalimāt lā Tamūt, p.53.

169. See for example his poems, "Min al-Aʿmāq Ṣarakhtu ilaik yā Maut", and poem No.24, Al-Qaṣīdah Kāf.

170. "Al-Qaṣīdah Kāf, li Tawfīq Ṣāyigh", Shiʿr quarterly, No.16, Autumn, 1960, p.142.

171. From "Min al-Aʿmāq Ṣarakhtu ilaik yā Maut".

172. From poem No.23, ibid.

173. From poem No.18, ibid.

174. From poems Nos.17 and 16 respectively, ibid.

175. From poem No.2, ibid.

176. From poem No.3, ibid.

177. From his poem, "ʿAn Jamīlah al-Jazāʾiriyyah", ibid.

178. From his poem, "Al-Ḥuzn", Al-Nās Fī Bilādi, p.87.

179. See for example such poems as "Al-Nās fī Bilādi", ibid., pp.65-7 where the uncle, Muṣṭafa, the wiseman and the story-teller of the village and his grandson Khalīl, the silent rebel, are vividly delineated. See also the lively description of Zahrān in "Shanq Zahrān", ibid., pp.55-8. See Z.N. Mahmūd's protest on ʿAbd al-Ṣabūr's poem, "Al-Nās fī Bilādi" in which he rejects his description of the people, "Mā Hākadha 'l-Nās fī Bilādi", Falsafah wa Fann, pp.352-7. However, Dr. Mahmūd's criticism puts more literal meaning in the poet's words than was meant by him.

180. From his poem, "Aḥlām al-Fāris al-Qadīm", in his diwan of the same name, p.92.

181. From his poem, "Riḥlah fi 'l-Lail", Al-Nās fī Bilādi, p.47.

182. From his poem, "Hajama 'l-Tatār", ibid., p.51.

183. Ibid., p.52. This image has another defect: the use of 'dyed' suggests a great deal of blood and is not congruent with the use of sprinkling of blood.

184. Ibid.

185. See for example M. al-Nuwaihi's critical book, Qadiyyat al-Shi'r al-Jadīd, and I. Ismā'īl's book, Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āṣir, in which 'Abd al-Sabūr's work forms nearly the central contribution from which most illustration on the new techniques of modern Arabic poetry are taken, much to the neglect of several other avant-garde experiments, and others.

186. Other defects are dilution, a prosaic tendency and a weakness of structure and sentence formation:

وضعت العـــود ثم صنعت بالكلمات الحانـــا
بريئات كما نـــي القلـــب
وقلت لها بأن الحب ما يصنع بالانسان انسانا

Aqūlu Lakum, p.34; etc.

187. The Background of Modern Poetry, p.3.

188. The Poetic Image, p.107.

189. See for example Al-Ādāb, October, 1969, for several examples of the inapt use of imagery, e.g. this verse by 'Abd al-Karīm al-Nā'im from his poem "Abā Dhur": وكيف سرابها يشرى بكل بشاشة الثمـــن , and this verse by Ḥasab al-Sheikh Ja'far from his poem, "Al-Malakah wa 'l-Mutasawwil", p.38:

واسحق بزنديـك هشيم الريح والزمـــــن

190. For a resumé of the ideas of Classical Arab critics on the simile and the great position it occupied in Classical times, see M. Nāṣīf, "Al-Ma'nā 'l-Adabi li 'Tashbīh", Al-Sūrah Il-Adabiyyah, pp.46-72.

191. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, under SIMILE.

192. Ilī Ḥāwi, "Al-Sūrah baina 'l-Shi'r al-Qadīm wa 'l-Shi'r al-Mu'āṣir", Al-Ādāb, February, 1960, p.53.

193. M. Nāṣīf, op.cit., p.186; see also p.61 where he attacks clarity in poetry.

194. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, loc.cit.

195. Heroic Poetry, p.267.

196. Ibid.

197. From his poem, "Unshūdat al-Maṭar" in his diwan of the same name, p.160.

198. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, loc.cit.
Nāṣif describes the concept al-Jāḥiẓ has of the simile as "ان التشبيـــه يفيد الغيرية لا العينية ، وان التشبيه لا يخرج المتشابهات من احكامها وحدودها ، وان اطـــلاق الكلـــوط الانســـان لا يعنـــي الخلـــط بين تعريفيهمـــا ." op.cit., pp.53-4. In this al-Jāḥiẓ describes one of the main characteristics of the simile. However, Nāṣif does not agree with him.

199. From his poem, "Yāsamīnah", Al-Masrāh wa 'l-Marāyā, p.278.

200. N.B. his implicit agreement with the ideas of his brother, Ilī Ḥāwi.

201. "Unshūdat al-Maṭar", p.162.

202. Bowra says on this, "This is a technique pursued by many users of similes. It draws attention to more than one aspect of a complex situation and shows how much the poet sees in it.", Heroic Poetry, p.272. In another place he says, "When a poet wishes to produce a particularly striking effect, he may pile up similes... taking care that each adds something new", ibid., p.273. The discussion above attempts to draw attention that this effect is emotional.

203. See Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, loc.cit.; see also Nāṣif, op.cit., pp.64 and 67 where he interprets the ideas of 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjāni to the same effect.

204. From his poem, "Jasad al-Ḥaṣāt", Al-Masrah wa 'l-Marāyā, p.195.

205. Loc.cit.

206. Ibid.

207. From his poem, "Ṣa'aqtuluk", Al-Nās fī Bilādi, pp.147-8. N.B. the metrical fault in sixth line.
In the present writer's poem, "Adhru' al-Kattān", a cluster of four similes, the only ones in the poem, appears at the beginning of a stanza. This is a poem on death in which a description of the ritual of the Oriental funeral is attempted. Here the description is ended and a kind of keening begins, in which the traits of the dead youth are enumerated, in imitation of folk usage. The use of rather familiar similes was deliberately sought in an attempt to forge a link with the folk usage:

من السجن كأمير نائم ،كفارس القتى السلاح
من السجن كأمير نائم ،كفارس القتى السلاح
كعاشق ارهقه الحب ،كسر لعبت بحوله نكب الرياح

Al-'Audah min al-Nab' al-Hālim, p.176. Al-Bayyāti also has a passage which abounds with similes:

ناديت باسمك والجليد
كالليل يهبط فوق رأسي كالضباب
كعيون امك في وداعي ،كالغيب

"Ughniyah ilā Waladi 'Ali", Al-Majd li 'l-Aṭfāl wa 'l-Zaitūn, p.57.

208. The Poetic Image, p.105.

SECTION G: OBLIQUITIES

Symbol, Allusion, Folklore and Myth

(i) The Symbol

One of the most common obliquities in avant-garde Arabic poetry is the use of symbols. A symbol is the deliberate use of a word or a phrase to signify something else, not by analogy (for unlike metaphor and simile it lacks a paired subject), but by implication and reference. A symbol is chosen arbitrarily by the poet to stand for a poetic "idea or set of ideas"[1] and may be described as a "sort of disguise for these ideas".[2] However, G. Whalley maintains that a "symbol... is always a vehicle for feeling, for complex and valuable states of awareness, and never a vehicle for dogma or for ideas",[3] a notion fully adopted by I. Ismā'īl in his discussion of symbol and myth in contemporary Arabic poetry.[4] Now whereas one agrees completely with the fact that a poetic symbol can never be a vehicle for dogma, because dogma has its own fixed emblems, or for any pure system of thought, one cannot accept the notion that a symbol is evoked only by emotions. However, when one realises that in a genuine poet ideas are never pure thought but impose themselves on the poet emotionally, one might see a line of unity between the two concepts. In the poetic experience, ideas evoke emotions and, more often than not, emotions give birth to ideas which give them their boundary and coherence.

In every national literature, many conventional symbols can be found; in Arabic: the moon, the sword, the crescent, the cross (the last two being fairly modern in their implication), etc. All these have meanings which are widely recognisable. But a symbolic poet will have his own private symbols.* These are naturally more difficult to interpret, but are more exciting and rewarding.

Although most avant-garde Arab poetry is symbolic in general, not all

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* "Symbolism", says E. Wilson, "may be defined as an attempt... to communicate unique personal feelings."[5]

its poets resort exclusively to the use of symbols in the personal sense described above. Although al-Sayyāb, a master of the metaphor, employs certain personal symbols, the symbolic value of his poetry remains more general and archetypal. His two greatest symbols are the Village and the City which already stand for generalized symbols and are on the way of becoming a convention. Symbols of innocence and spiritual dignity on the one hand, and of oppression, materialism and alienation on the other, they are used in the same vein by several contemporary poets such as al-Bayyāti, Ḥijāzi and Ḥāwi.[6]

Some poets tend to sustain one or more symbols throughout the bulk of their work,* which gives a kind of solidarity and cohesion to their poetry, and helps the poet to achieve further condensation, for when a poet has created a good symbol, "something that has a permanent reference to a set of ideas, it is an obvious economy to repeat it".[8] However, this has its disadvantages, for it can become tedious in the long run, can act as a check to further originality, and can lend itself to being easily adopted by other poets and thus get conventionalised. In modern Arabic poetry some symbols such as the sea, the rain and the wind[9] have suffered this fate.

The use of symbols in modern Arabic poetry is too vast a subject to be treated fully here. The poetry of Adūnīs, for example, is thickly laden with symbols, as well as with other kinds of obliquities. But two examples of the use of symbols in contemporary Arabic poetry should suffice the purpose of this discussion. These are Khalīl Ḥāwi's poem "Jinniyyat al-Shāṭi'"[10] and Muḥammad Muṣṭafa Badawi's "Al-Tilāl".[11] Ḥāwi's poem

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* Freedom is symbolized by the sea in the poetry of Yūsuf al-Khāl. It occurs several times, for example, in his diwan, Al-Bi'r al-Mahjūrah; this example is from his poem, "Wahdah":

الدوالیب واقدام غزاة وعذاریت بها یرزح البحـــــــر

and this example is from his poem, "Memento Mori": "كان موج البحر یرتـــد
ایهـــا البحـــــر ، ایها الاصیل البحـــر" and this from his poem, "Al-Du ā'": "عن الشط میـــاء
".[7]

resorts to the use of two main symbols, the young gypsy girl and the priest. The gypsy girl is meant to be the symbol of primeval innocence and vitality:

تفاحة الوعر الخصيب ، صبيـــة
سمراء من خيم الحجـــر
قلب الصباح يشعّ من نهدَيْ
عقـــود الدرر 12

and the priest " الأسود الداجي المقنع بالرمـــاد "[13] the symbol of civilisation who with his sophisticated and corrupt methods aims at destroying the innocence and vitality of the gypsy girl and succeeds in changing her into an old hag " شمطاء تنبش في المزابل عن تشور البرتقـــال ".[14]

In Badawi's poem there are also two main symbols, the hills and the lake. These are rich with associations that it is possible to interpret them in more than one way. The hills which no one has seen but which everybody speaks of and longs for:

... يسردون سر التـــلال
وقد تلألأت الأشـــواق
فـــي العيون 15

"البحيرة الخرساء"[16] might denote any ideal, unrealised (in fact unrealisable according to the poignant irony in the poem) world on the one hand and the world of reality on the other. It might also denote the other world with its (fantastic?) assurance of everlasting life and the absolute certainty of death. Such examples of symbols having more than one meaning exist in several well-written poems such as Nāzik al-Malā'ikah's poem "Al-Uf'uwān"[17] where the beast might denote a personal as well as a communal nightmare, and Tawfīq Ṣāyigh's prose poem "Min al-A'māq Ṣarakhtu ilaika yā Maut",[18] where the gallop on the mare's back seems to symbolise both the poet's (or man's) quick voyage through life unto his death, or the lover's trip to the climax in love.

Modern avant-garde poets, however, do not regard themselves as Symbolists. They employ symbols just as they employ several other means of obliquities. They even resort at times to the effective simplicity of the direct statement. They, in fact, benefit from the poetic experience

of diverse experiments both in the Arab poetic heritage as well as in the Western. The important thing for them does not lie in writing as Symbolists, Imagists, Surrealists or Existentialists, but in presenting life and man's condition in their world in the best means attainable. As C.M. Bowra, speaking of modern Western poets, puts it, theirs is an "imaginative realism which allows no frontiers to the poetic spirit but assumes that it may find its material in any branch of life".[19]

(ii) Allusion

Allusion is a "tacit reference to another literary work, to another art, to history, to contemporary figures, or the like".[20] Tillyard rightly regards allusion as a minor obliquity,[21] the obliquity consisting

> in a statement's implying more than its words state because those words provoke a reference to a literary context, and that context, if known to the reader, cannot but supply an additional significance.[22]

Allusion has often been used to "display knowledge".[23] This was quite common in the past,[24] but it is in the very nature of allusion to be open, at all times, to the display of erudition, and poets in modern times cannot be exempted from the possibility that they might exploit this potential to show their wide knowledge and cleverness. However, allusion has more important uses. It can be used for the sake of arousing an emotional appeal in a reader or audience "sharing some experience or knowledge with the writer".[25] In modern Arabic, this has been exploited greatly by poets adhering to an ideology, especially in platform poetry, with the aim of bringing about an emotional aura. The following verses by Yūsuf al-Khaṭīb are typical:

واتركوا الدار فهي ملك ذويها ولقد آن ان يدق البـــاب
هي هـذى الزنـود ، اعلامنا الحمـر ، تعالت يمور فيها الشبـاب [26]

where the allusion to Shauqi's more famous and highly exciting verse is clear:

وللحرية الحمراء بـاب بكل يد مضرجة يدق

Again in the following verse, Sulaimān al-'Isā alludes, probably

unconsciously, to the ancient poet's constant mention of " ديـــار " as he stands on the vississitudes of the old camp:

هذي ديار الاهل •• في خاطري سكرى •• بانسام الصبا تعبـــــــق [27]

But the most artistic function of allusion is its use "to enrich a literary work by merging the echoed material with the new context".[28] In this it performs its main function which is to "thicken the meaning of certain details",[29] for its use involves an economy and a compression. "In a minimum of words a large context rich in association can be evoked."[30] In order to be effective, the technique of allusion assumes first of all an established literary tradition as a source of value, which the audience must be able to share.[31] To be successful, allusion must "refer to highly or reasonably familiar originals".[32]

According to the Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, several types of allusion exist, but we are here particularly interested in two types. The first is topical allusion which means a reference to recent events. This abounds in modern Arabic verse not only in avant-garde but also in platform poetry.[33] The second is metaphorical allusion which is a technique using "the echoed element as a vehicle for the poetic tenor that it acquires in the new context".[34] It is the richest and most complex type of allusion because it depends on a wealth and a continuity of literary tradition. Allusion of this type serves in fact as a unifying factor in literature and can achieve harmonies which other means cannot attain. It is natural for such a kind of allusion to be dependent more on the poet's own literary heritage. Most unconscious allusion[35] stems from the poet's national literature which has become more a part of the naturally acquired aesthetic experience of both the poet and the reader or audience than any foreign literature. On the other hand, world literature remains a wide open field for poets to use. However, the difficulty of communicating the implications of such an allusion to the reader might limit it to the status of mere deliberate reference, because it cannot rely on a "close poet-audience relationship",[36] but demands an explanation by

the poet or his critics and an initiation of the reader to the meaning of the passage. Of course, this kind of reference is not functional in any form of oral verse.

Conscious allusion in modern Arabic poetry has been largely inspired by T.S. Eliot's use of allusion in the "Waste Land" and other poems.[37] Al-Bayyāti's poetry, especially in Abārīq Muhashshahmah abounds with allusions and direct quotations, showing Eliot's pervasive influence on him.[38] He uses both topical and metaphorical allusions varying from political slogans: "يا ، يسقط المستعمرون"[39] to reference to recent events:

40 ويسلخون جلودنا ، ويصنعون
منها فراء للعواهر والقياصرة الصغار

to political dogma: " مساواة ، عدل ، حرية"[41] to folk usage in this double reference:

42 كوريقة صفراء يا ريح الشمال
عبر البحيرات العميقة والبساتين احملني ، والتلال .

The nostalgic use of the 'north wind' here in the song of the wood-cutter stems from the heart of folk songs " ريح الشمالي غير اللونا "; the double reference, however, is also to Shelley's poem, "Ode to the West Wind" in which the following passage is famous:[43]

> Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
> I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

Al-Bayyāti also refers to proverbs: " ما حك جلدك مثل ظفرك "[44] and " كل الدروب ـ هنا ـ الى روما تؤدي "[45]; and to literary passages, both Classical:

46 لا يسلم الشرف الرفيع من الاذى حتى يراق على جوانبه الدم

and modern: " والخبز والحرية الحمراء والغد والمصير "[47], referring to Shauqi's above-mentioned verse; and to current newspaper and radio cliches:

ما زلنا بخير والهيال
48 ـ والقمل والوتى ـ يخصون الاقارب بالسلام

as well as to Biblical text: " فليدفن الاموات موتاهم "[49].

There is no doubt that al-Bayyāti has in Abārīq Muhashshamah the greatest concentration of allusions in modern Arabic poetry, but other poets also exploited this interesting poetic technique. In general, the use of allusion in modern Arabic poetry does not vary a great deal from

al-Bayyāti's use, although in some poets a greater subtlety is shown. It will not be necessary for the purpose of this work, therefore, to give more than a few more examples.

Yūsuf al-Khāl shows a great subtlety in his frequent use of allusion. He often uses Biblical references but exploits also the literary wealth available to him. The first poem in Al-Bi'r al-Mahjūrah, a short dedication to Ezra Pound, is informed by this technique and the allusions in it refer both to Biblical themes (the fig leaf, the crucifixion) and to Ezra Pound's poetic teachings and his political plight. Here a close but subtle analogy exists between Pound and Christ as well as between Pound as a persecuted literary pioneer and teacher and al-Khāl himself:

50

١ ــ سأدناك ورقة تيـــن
٢ ــ فاتّا عراة ، عراة
٣ ــ اثمنا الى الشعر فاغفر لنا
٤ ــ ورد الينا الحيـاة

٥ ــ لك الوعد : انا سنضرب في
٦ ــ الارض نبني بدمع الجبيـن
٧ ــ عوالم للشعر من عقـر
٨ ــ مفاتيحهـــن

٩ ــ جراحك للا وليـن
١٠ ــ عزاء ود رب خلا ص لنا
١١ ــ اذا صلبوك هناك : اليهود ،
١٢ ــ فانك تبحث حيا هنا .

His Biblical allusions are many. Tillyard's comment that Biblical allusions especially tend to be over familiar and hence lose much of their allusive significance becoming "more a portion of speech than of literature"[51] does not apply to their use in Arabic. For Biblical allusions in Arabic are not common but have only been recently introduced into poetry together with Biblical and Christian terms and phrases. Al-Khāl's poetry, therefore, benefits greatly from the freshness of these Biblical allusions, and so does the prose poetry of Tawfīq Ṣāyigh and Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā. The following by Jabrā is interesting and typical:

فعلى الجبل ، حيث اقيمت خشبـة الوعيـــد
انفجرت صرخة الماء هلاهـــل [52]

A poet might allude ironically to a literary passage, sometimes inverting the meaning completely as in the following by another poet from

a poem on the Palestinian refugees and their conditions as an uprooted, alienated people. The poet here mocks the attitude of the Arab people towards the refugees which limits itself to the outward show of sorrow:

53 "رب ورقاء هتوف في الضحى" هاجت شجانـــا
فذكرنـــاه وغصنا في بكانـــا
واسترحنـــا من نشازات الهدير.

In its sustained use throughout the history of Arabic poetry Classical and modern, the image of the dove had always pointed to nostalgia and parting with one's beloved and one's home.* No bad omen is implied,

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* Even in Sufi poetry the mystical allusions to the dove do not part from this general approach. Muhyi al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabi says in Tarjumān al-Ashwāq:

54 ناحت مطوقة فحن حزينـــ وشجاه ترجيع لها وحنيـــن

The dove in this and other passages, even if explained in the commentary of the author, translated by Nicholson, as subtle spiritual essences,[55] Universal Spirit,[56] or Absolute Wisdom,[57] has been used in the traditional manner. In modern times, poets have used this allusion throughout the decades. Among these are Shauqi whose verses in al-Andalus are famous:

يا نائح الطلح اشباه عوادينا نشجى لوادك ام نأسى لوادينا
ماذا تقص علينا غير ان يـــدا قصت جناحك جالت في حواشينا

Khalīl Mardam Bek, al-Zahāwi, al-Rasāfi and al-Kāzimi and many others also used it.[58] It was also used even by such poets as al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr:

59 اعرني بعض شجوك يا حمـــام فقد غلب الاسى وعصى الكـــلام
كلانا ، يا شقيق، هوى الاغانـي فني عهد عليك ولي زمـــام

Amīn Nakhlah:

60 وهل عند اسراب الحمائم نجعة على غير شعل مزقته ديـــار

Ibrāhīm Tūqān:

61 يا ابنة الايك غردي او فنوحي نحسن يالم الهديل جروحـــي

and finally Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb:

62 ناحـت مطوقة بباب الطاق في قلبـي تذكر بالفـــراق

It is interesting to note that the Lebanese folk-poet, Rashīd Nakhlah, when using the image of the dove, took it partially out of its traditional context and associated it with peace and love:

63 يا حمام بحيـاة من سكّاك حمـام وطوقك تتكون رسول حب وســلام
مرمغ على سطوح الحبيب جوانحك وجبلي من نفاسو محك شمة خـــزام

This is used here as a universal symbol denoting peace.

like the allusion to the crow which is directly connected with a hopeless parting, as in death. The crow has a sinister implication, the dove a purely nostalgic one, but both, no doubt, have become archetypal images. The following are famous Classical archetypal images of the dove by Ahmad Ibn Yūsuf al-Manāzi (d.1045) and Abū Bakr al-Shibli, the mystic (d.945) :

ناحت مطوقة بباب الطاق فجرت سوابق دمعي المدرار

and this to which the above mentioned modern passage alludes:

رب ورقاء هتوف في الضحى ذات شجو هتفت في غصن

But in the modern passage the allusion is not used to stress the feelings of nostalgia, but to ridicule them in a people whose only nostalgia (according to the poem) is aroused by outside traditional stimuli and expressed only in tears.

(iii) Folklore

The incorporation of folklorish elements in poetry comes often as a natural process and need not always serve as an allusion to a specific value which the poet means to point out and develop in connection with a particular point. But it always reveals a vitality and dynamism of experience and, generally speaking, it might have an effect on the development of the language of poetry towards greater contemporaneousness.

Folklore in Classical Arabic poetry has not been studied yet and one cannot appreciate the extent to which it permeates that poetry. However, one could venture to say that the poetry which catered to kings and princes might not have been so laden with folklorish elements as other poetry because of the formal traditions which eulogies had to uphold and the sort of elevated position of its objects: caliph, prince or dignitary.* In modern times, poetry has been liberated to a great extent from this tradition, but the strongest obstacle to the spontaneous incorporation of

* One of the greatest values of zajal and early muwashshah lies in their capacity to give a more panoramic picture of life and to portray more the mind of the common people. Initially a poetry of the people, the muwashshah has more elements of folklore than formal poetry, especially in the kharjah, which portrays their sense of humour to a great deal.

folklorish elements was the great divergence between written and spoken Arabic. The neo-Classical movement was a confirmation of many Classical expressions and attitudes, which took poetry even further away from modern folklore. Exceptions are, of course, found, especially in the humorous poems of Ḥāfiẓ.

In the avant-garde poetry of the present period, however, a greater awareness of the vitality and importance of folklore is seen and a conscious attempt at incorporating folklorish expressions, attitudes, proverbs and traditions has been made. The rise of social consciousness and of the importance of the common people as opposed to the elite also helped to break the barriers between the strict formalism of the neo-Classical tradition and the mobile and more spontaneous elements of folklore.

But not all the links with the folklore were conscious and deliberate. The whole trend of poetry pointed towards simplification and vitality. It was only right that some poets would feel a natural inclination to resort to folklorish elements in language, traditions and attitudes. Among these Nizār Qabbāni is the best example. Qabbāni's great talent spontaneously forged a strong link with the Damascene folklore. Many folk expressions, attitudes and traditions were incorporated:

64 ويحـزون قبـور الاوليـــاء
علها ترزقهم رزّا .. واطفالا .. قبور الاوليـاء
ويحـدون السجاجيد الانيقات الطـرر ..

Among other poets who discovered this great secret of vitality, although not as spontaneously as Qabbāni, was Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Muʿṭi Ḥijāzi. Some of his poems show a great affinity with the spirit of the people, reflecting their turns of mind and their traditions:

65 الصـوت في الميـدان طن
الصمت حط كالكفـن
واقبلـت ذبابة خضـراء
جاءت من المقابر الريفية الحزينة
ولوابست جناحها على صبي مات في المدينة

The green fly, frequenter of corpses in the village, alone claims the dead boy in the city. Ḥijāzi's nostalgia in the big city, moreover, shares a

similar feeling which permeates the Arab spirit harking back to the nostalgia of the Arab people since Bedouin times. Al-Sayyāb's greater sophistication did not miss that nostalgia, but he was a more ambitious poet who was able to achieve a marriage between folklorish elements and universal myths as in his reference to Job's suffering:

66 ولكن ايوب ان صاح صاح :
"لك الحمد ، ان الرزايا ندى
وان الجراح هدايا الحبيب".

This is very folklorish, taken directly from the mouth of the people all over the Arab world.* Its mythical side will be discussed shortly.

The conscious use of folklore in poetry is one of the important introductions to the technique of modern Arabic poetry, bringing in vitality and a sense of reality. It is one area of true human experience regained for modern poetry. It is important for the modern lyrical poet in Arabic, however, to look for folklorish elements in his own environment: the things he says and hears, the normal everyday turn of his mind and of that of his people whom he thoroughly knows and understands. Folklore is an already well assimilated material, but it is relatively new to the modern poetic practice in Arabic. This novelty gives it a freshness that can carry with it the element of surprise because it is different from the previous formal poetic practice. However, artificiality and improvisations can be fatal. A dramatic sense of reality must be sustained and the use of the folklorish element must, even when consciously introduced, acquire the smoothness and naturalness of a spontaneous expression. Otherwise the poem will appear patched and of an uneven texture.

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* The normal Iraqi saying is "صبرك صبر ايوب". In the Palestinian dialect it is "يا صبر ايوب على الوعد والمكتوب".

(iv) The Myth and the Archetype*

The Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics[68] aptly attempts a synthetic definition of 'myth' which combines elements from what it calls "two contrary and one-sided views of the matter" as held by E. Cassirer and R. Chase. Cassirer's view treats myth as primarily a kind of perspective in which it "becomes synonymous with the mythopoeic mode of consciousness, it is simply a basic way of envisaging experience and carries no necessary connotations of storytelling". Chase's view insists that myth is merely story. The Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics defines myth as

> a story or complex of story elements taken as expressing, and therefore as implicitly symbolizing, certain deep-lying aspects of human and transhuman existence.

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* Arab poets and critics had been for several decades aware of the importance of myth in poetry. This was demonstrated in the course of this work. However a resumé of these attempts will give a more coherent picture. Nasīb ʿArīḍah, as early as 1925, used the Arabic myth of "Iram Dhāt al-ʿImād" (the strange city of gold and precious stones built, as the myth goes, by Shaddād bin ʿĀd, which disappeared in the desert and would re-appear only once in every forty years, and happy was the man who saw it) in his poem "Nār Iram". He used the myth symbolically as an impossible spiritual quest. Abū Mādi used the Arabic myth of "Al-ʿAnqāʾ" in his poem of the same name, also to symbolize the quest for happiness. Al-ʿAqqād wrote in Al-Fuṣūl a short and rather superficial article on myth entitled "Ārāʾ fi 'l-Asāṭīr". Abū Shādi in his poetry and on the pages of his magazine, Apollo, tried to draw attention to the importance of myth in poetry, although his own application was not successful. ʿAli 'l-ʿInāni wrote in 1932 his long article on Greek mythology, "Apollon wa 'l-Shiʿr al-Hayy" which he published in Apollo, calling on Arab poets to adopt these myths in their works, and in 1934 Nuʿaimah wrote his long article on the myth of the phoenix. In 1936 Shafīq al-Maʿlūf's painstaking work, ʿAbqar, appeared in which many myths from Arab mythology were incorporated, but his approach was narrative and flat. In 1937 M. ʿAbd al-Muʿīd's valuable book, Al-Asāṭīr al-ʿArabiyyah Qabl al-Islām appeared. ʿAli M. Tāhā also used Greek myths in his volume, Arwāḥ wa Ashbāḥ, (1942), and as in ʿAbqar, his treatment was flat and by no means symbolic, which prompted Mandūr to criticise him severely. The myths of Tammūz and ʿIshtār or ʿAshtarūt had been used in Arabic creative writing at least as early as Gibrān's narrative piece "Liqāʾ" in Damʿah wa Ibtisāmah. Later on, in 1943, a more important work appeared on these two myths, when the Lebanese Ḥabīb Thābit published his long poem ʿAshtarūt wa Adūnīs, with a long introduction on the history and meaning of these two myths. Thus the publication in 1957 of Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā's translation of the part in Frazer's book, The Golden Bough, which deals with the fertility myth of Adonis, and in 1959 of Muḥammad Shukri ʿAyyād's important book on Western mythology and its use in modern Western literature helped only to enhance a current that had been long trying to establish itself. Moreover, several important poems using one kind of myth or another had already been written before those dates, as will be demonstrated below.[67]

The idea of narrative "as an essential part of the meaning of myth" is therefore stressed here; but there is the insistence too

> that the original sources of such storytelling lie somehow below or beyond the conscious inventions of individual poets, and that the stories themselves thus serve as partly unconscious vehicles for meanings that have something to do with the inner nature of the universe and of human life.

It was Carl Jung who in modern times gave the fullest scientific interpretation, so far, of the origin of myth in human creativity, lodging it in the psyche. But much earlier than Jung writers like G. Vico in La Scienza nuova (1925) emphasised that

> primitive thought is essentially poetic, in that the endowment of inanimate objects with life, will, and emotion is at once the natural tendency of primitive man and the most sublime task of poetry.[69]

Many recent writers such as Owen Barfield uphold this idea. In his well-known book, Poetic Diction, Barfield quotes Emerson as saying that

> 'As we go back in history, language becomes more picturesque, until its infancy, when it is all poetry; or all spiritual facts are represented by natural symbols.' [70]

A statement near to his own heart, for to him, the phenomenon of myth is

> intimately bound up with the early history of meaning... the product of that same mysterious 'metaphorical period' when the inventive genius of humanity is said to have burgeoned and sprouted as never before or since;[71]

that period when meaning was "still suffused with myth, and Nature all alive in the thinking of man".[72]

Jung gives the origin of myth a psychological interpretation insisting that the source of myth is the psyche, as has been just mentioned. The psyche has contained, and still does, "all the images that have given rise to myths";[73]

> The tremendous dynamic effects of mythic-religious concepts on man's history, art and behaviour ... must be explained as psychic events with an independent nature of their own.[74]

He postulates a collective unconscious underlying primary myth-formation and consisting of 'primordial images' or 'archetypes':

> The Divine Father, the Earth Mother, the World Tree, the satyr or centaur or other man-animal monster, the descent into Hell, the Purgatorial stair, the washing away of sin, the castle of attainment, the culture-hero such as Prometheus bringing fire or other basic gift to mankind, the treacherous betrayal of the hero, the sacrificial death of the god, the god in disguise or the prince under enchantment - these and many other archetypal ideas serve as persistently recurrent themes in human thought.[75]

To Jung, the collective unconscious is an area beyond, and much vaster than the personal conscious. He envisages it as the:

> unconscious inherited wisdom of the race. As such he sees it as accounting not only for the striking analogies between the themes and patterns of myth in many different cultures, but also for the presence of recurring mythological and archaic symbols in dreams, even in the dreams of those who have no knowledge of the traditional and literary sources which perpetuate them.[76]

It is to these symbols that Jung gave the name of archetypes or primordial images, "reborn in every individual". These images appear when particular circumstances are encountered in the life of the individual "which bring him in touch with some aspect of this universal collective experience".[77]

Since the end of the eighteenth century, there has been increasing insistence upon the need of myth in poetry.[78] It is considered by some writers that:

> The spiritual problems of the poet in contemporary society arise in part out of the lack of myths which can be felt warmly, envisaged in concrete and contemporary imagery, and shared with a wide body of responsive readers.[79]

The 'mythical method' was seen by T.S. Eliot to be a vital factor in art. In his memorial lecture on Yeats, Eliot said that Yeats "out of intense and personal experience, is able to express a general truth; retaining all the particularity of his experience to make of it a general symbol".[80] Speaking of the mythical method in James Joyce's Ulysses he said that he regarded the book to be "the most important expression which the present age has found".[81] for Joyce, in his use of the myth has been able to manipulate "a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity". This is simply "a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the

immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history".[82]

It is not possible in this general work to discuss the use of myth by modern Western authors, although in a specialised work this should be examined for the sake of tracing the influences and drawing the appropriate parallels between Western and Arab poets. However, Eliot's use of the fertility myth in "The Waste Land", which seemed to give an answer to the Arab poets' search for an interpretation, in poetic terms, of the dilemma and chaos of Arab life, must be examined briefly.

> The central experience which informs most of the poetry of Eliot is ... /the/ age-old pattern of symbolic death and birth, lived through as an intense personal experience.[83]

"The Waste Land" revolves around a myth of sacrificed death which Eliot found in the ancient rituals of Adonis, Attis, Osiris, described fully by Sir James Frazer in The Golden Bough.[84] The myth symbolizes the sacrificial death of the god and the restoration of fecundity to the waste land through his blood. The ancients "attributed the annual cycle of change primarily to corresponding changes in their deities".[85] These deities "annually died and rose again from the dead".[86] With their rise, life was reborn, and plants grew again and fertility returned to the earth.

Eliot used the myth implicitly, but readers acquainted with the works of Frazer and Jessie L. Weston's book on the Grail legend, From Ritual to Romance, which Eliot acknowledged as one of his main sources of information,[87] will recognise in the poem certain references to vegetation rituals and ceremonies.[88]

"The Waste Land" is a critique of contemporary Western life. "The presence of sterile degeneration and the necessity of regeneration and change is the general truth behind it and its central theme."[89] Elizabeth Drew elaborates further on this:

> One of the elements is the blindness and numbness of the external contemporary consciousness; its sterility, impotence, emptiness and aridity; its general loss of any vital relationship with the language of symbols, and in general with the human heritage and tradition. ... /Eliot/ is agonizingly aware, in the imprisonment of his personal waste land, that the possibilities of rebirth

> cannot be dismissed as an historical anachronism; that the truth of the experience is eternally present and that the living of it plunges the whole man into a process of disintegration and conflict.[90]

Although "The Waste Land" is not a poem of despair, it stresses the living death of the crowd in the 'unreal city' and the horror of a disintegrated life. Arab poets found in Eliot's implicit use of the fertility myth an expression of ultimate love and an emphasis on the potential of self-sacrifice. It was the idea of the cycle of sacrificed death that leads to rebirth which attracted them most. From the mid-fifties when al-Sayyāb's masterpiece, "Unshūdat al-Maṭar" was written on to the early sixties, Arab poets repeatedly drew the analogy between the aridity of Arab life after the 1948 disaster in Palestine and the aridity of the land in the fertility myths, saved from complete waste only by death and the spilling of blood, analogous to the falling of rain over a parched land.

The reader of "The Waste Land" can immediately realise that the dominating image is that of water, which has, as Elizabeth Drew describes "the ambiguity of all primordial images in that it symbolizes means and ends of both life and death, and both as inseparable parts of one process".[91]

Rain is also the central image in "Unshūdat al-Maṭar". The implicit use of the Tammūz (or Adonis) myth in this early poem by al-Sayyāb, the contrast drawn by the poet, not between the aridity of the land and the falling of the rain, but between the fertility of the rain-drenched land and the aridity of the human soul, set the pattern for numerous poems after him:

وعند ان كنا صغارا كانت السماء [92]
تغيم في الشتاء
ويهطل المطر
وكل عام — حين يعشب الثرى — نجوع

An analogy is drawn, too, between the rain and the brine water of the gulf:

وينشر الخليج من هباته الكثار [93]
على الرمال : رغوة الاجاج والمحار
وما تبقى من عظام بائس غريق
من المهاجرين ظل يشرب الردى
من لجة الخليج والقرار

A tragic end, resulting in death and futility. And like the drowned man who drinks the brine water of the gulf, the poet's dead mother drinks the rain water in her grave.[94] What difference then lies between the life giving rain and brine water? None, for the moment, but the future is fertile with hope:

اكاد اسمع العراق يذخر الرعـــود
ويخزن البروق في السهول والجبا ل
حتى اذا ما فضّ عنها ختمها الرجال
لم تترك الرياح من ثمـود
في الواد من اثـــر [95]

The analogy is also beautifully drawn between the drops of rain and the tears of the starving and naked, as well as the drops of blood from the oppressed. The poem is built up of contrasts in which the poet's comments on his own personal life only enhance the dramatic sense of the work and give it an immediate poignancy and an even greater sense of reality. None of the Tammūzian poems written later by al-Sayyāb himself or by any of the several poets who employed this particular myth, ever equalled this poem.

The Tammūz myth is also implied in his lovely poem, "Al-Nahr wa 'l-Maut", where Buwaib, the river of al-Sayyāb's village, Jaikūr, (probably the most famous village in Arabic poetry), is the sleepless eye of memory, the shrine of innocence, happiness and fertility, to which the poet yearns to return laden with gifts: " كأني احمل النذور ــ اليك من قمح ومن زهـــور ".[96]
But it is also the door to death: فالموت عالم غريب يفتن الصغـــــار [97]
وبابه الخفي كان فيك ، يا بويـب ..

carrying both the potentials of death and of life that ensues from it:

اود لو غرقت فيك ، القعر المحـــار [98]
اشيد منـــه دار

In "Jaikūr wa 'l-Madīhah" the myth is also woven into the poem with great poetic skill, but it does not complete the normal Tammūzian cycle of death and revival, the poem ending on a note of despair and the discovery of the futility of struggle. In "Al-Nahr wa 'l-Maut" the poet had aimed at changing the chemistry of death, of one's drowning in his own blood into life, where stars and moon " اود لو غرقت في دمي الى القـــرار "[99] alike illuminate waters and trees green with fertility and life:

"يضيء فيها خضرة المياه والشجر ـ ما تنضح النجوم والقمر".[100] But in "Jaikūr wa il-Madīnah" there is no hope for the village. The poem is one of the most moving and desperate expressions of hopelessness in modern Arabic poetry. Jaikūr is abandoned by her children who all flock to the loveless, murderous City whose streets are ropes of mud and fire, the veins of the dead Tammūz who exemplifies the village youth devoured by the barren City: "قتلت، اذ قتلته، الريح والمطر".[101] The poet himself is one of those trapped in the City, besieged wherever he looks by the Wall that blocks the road to Jaikūr. The hopelessness of the struggle to revive the green village and save innocence and fertility from a city life commercialised beyond mercy and enriched with the famine of Jaikūr "حصاد المجاعات من جنتيها"[102] is exemplified by the following heart-rending verses:

ويضاي : لا مخلب للصراع فاسعى بما في دروب المدينة
ولا قبضة لابتعاث الحياة من الطين .. لكنها محض طينة[103]
وجيكور من دونها قام سور، وبوابة واحتوتها سكينة

Jaikūr is an archetypal image of lost innocence and happiness. The influence of Eliot's 'unreal city' in "The Waste Land" is seen in al-Sayyāb's hatred of the City, but it had helped only to emphasise what the poet authentically felt about city life. It must be remembered that this was the era when Arab villages had already awakened to life and were sending out their children to the capitals and cities in quest of knowledge and, more often, for the sake of earning a living, and al-Sayyāb, just like Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Muʿṭi Ḥijāzi and others, felt the difficulties of life and its dehumanization in the City. Al-Sayyāb never abandoned his yearning for Jaikūr and the simplicity of its life. It finally succeeded in becoming an accepted and immediately understood symbol in his poetry to which he alluded frequently:

أين جيكور ؟ جيكور ديوان شعري،[104]
موعد بين السواح نحشي وقبري

Was his poem, "Fi 'l-Maghrib al-ʿArabi", written in 1956, an attempt at translating the pagan myth of Tammūz into an Arabic counterpart with more factual links in history, thus bringing it nearer to the hearts and cultural experience of his readers? The theme of the dead and revived

God permeates it, and so does the fall and revival of a civilisation. This poem was written to extol the struggle of the Algerians in their war of liberation, and is one of the most interesting and effectual poems on the Algerian struggle. The prophet Muḥammad is the archetypal hero who, after a past glory, has died:

فأمسى تأكل الغبراء
والنيران من معناه
وبركه الغزاة بلا حذاء [105]

and all of us have died with him:

فنحن جميعنا اموات [106]
انا ومحمد والله

This is the death of heroism, of life, of all Arab civilisation, for not only the living but also the dead have died "ومتنا فيه ،من موتى ومن احياء".[107] The dawn of Arab civilisation began with the rise of Muḥammad and the knowledge of God, and it was the dynamism of the new faith which brought about the flux of that civilisation. It is this dynamism which al-Sayyāb has in mind in the poem, God and Muḥammad becoming symbols of it, stirred to life in us whenever our strength is revived, but dying in us whenever the sources of strength in us die away. Thus the God who roved once "بين عصائب الابطال",[108] who wore the shield of battle in Dhī Qār and who is now carrying the banner of the rebels in the Algerians mountains, this same God, has been sighted weeping in an abandoned house in Jaffa, and seen descending from the clouds, wounded and begging for alms, (N.B. the Christian connotations in the last image).[109]

This is another attempt at producing the effect of the Tammūz myth and the personification of the same vision of life after death. However, being based on factual figures and events, and linked with Arab history by several direct allusions, it remains limited in scope and the core of the Tammūz myth, that of a resurrection as a result of sacrificial death, is missing. Nevertheless, it remains an archetypal poem of great significance and effect, embracing, despite the audacious originality of its treatment, particular motifs recurrent in Arab poetic and emotional experience through long centuries of verse making, motifs which convey a

"mythic sense of race, of rootage in the soil", of time as a recurrent cycle of events "shot through with a firm line of communal action"[110] in the creating and re-creating of civilization and the rejuvenation of the race. Thus the poem is bound to create in the reader a set of emotional responses typical of those created by archetypal poems of value. Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr was wrong, therefore, when he rejected the lovely poem, seeing in it a conflict between Islamic and Arab nationalist feelings.[111] The archetypal basis of the poem eluded him and other writers on al-Sayyāb completely. The poem closes with a prophetic announcement of the return of God (strength, virility, vigour) to the nation:

112 تمخضت القبور لتنشر الموتى ملا بيننا
وحبّ محمد وآلهه العربي والانصار
ان الوننا فينا

The powerful rhythmic structure of the poem, written in al-wāfir with a variation in al-rajaz, is very apt, for the poet exploits fully the vigorous potential of al-wāfir, resorting to al-rajaz when the mood changes to one of plaintive debility. The imagery is very fresh, without being too complicated, and often fittingly taken from Islamic motifs: the destroyed minaret, the green (an Islamic colour) brick, the adhān, etc. It is to such poems that al-Sayyāb owes his fame and supremacy in modern Arabic poetry.

. . . . . .

In 1958 Yūsuf al-Khāl published his diwan, Al-Bi'r al-Mahjūrah in which the sterility of life in the Arab world at the time was discovered and bemoaned, and rebirth sought and prayed for. Al-Khāl compared this sterility to a wilderness: " وجوهنا مفازة مشت عليها قدم البوار ",[113] in which people toil without hope:

114 المواكب الكادحة الرازحة الكواحل
النازحة الجفون في القرى ،
المواكب المقعدة الكسيحة التي
تنتظر الخلاص ؟ لا • تنتظر الفناء بالرضى

a picture of complete spiritual aridity. The barrenness that binds people willingly to this horrible destiny kills in them all notions of good and evil, so that the wealth of the overflowing well water in his poem "Al-Bi'r al-Mahjūrah" is not noticed by them. Dominated by apathy, they

neither drink from the well, nor maliciously throw a stone in it:*

115 وسائـــر البشـــر
تمر لا تشرب منها ، لا ولا
ترمي بها ، ترمي بها حجر

a situation, however, hardly applicable to the psychology of the people he is describing. The everflowing well water in the poem represents man (as exemplified by Ibrāhīm) in his unconquerable potential of creativity and resolution:

116 عرفت ابراهيم ،جارى العزيـــز ، من
زمـان ،عرفته بئرا يفيض ماؤهـــــا

And while the call rings loud for people to retire from the struggle to a stagnant refuge that shields them from danger, Ibrāhīm goes on:

117 لكـــن ابراهيم ظل سائـــــرا
الـى الامام سائـــرا
وصدره الصغيـر يملأ الصدى .

Other poems, too, show the central faith which the poet courageously puts forward. A comparison of man's life with that of the plants is basically a Semetic idea and constitutes another link with the fertility myth of Tammūz.[118] His poem "Al-Judhūr" is an excellent example of this linkage and embodies the fundamental faith of the poet that a rebirth will take place:

119 وفي التراب تهبـــط الجذور صعـــدا
فالارض مولـد ،حصـــاد .

for the secret lies in the roots (" والسر فـي الجـــذور ").[120]

The whole diwan is informed by the Tammūz myth. In his criticism of this volume, written in the same year, Jabrā says[121]

> This Tammūzian symbol is a new thing in Arabic poetry. It is imported, but only to stay... Yet it is not a new symbol for us as a people whose popular beliefs and customs have many /elements/ from the Tammūz myth in its many forms. If Western poets like T.S. Eliot have returned to this myth as a result of their cultural awareness of its inspirational and ritualistic value, to us it comes willingly as we look back ... to our

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* An interesting allusion to the popular proverb in Arabic : "Throw no stone into the well from which you drink."

unrecorded popular beliefs: it is in us.*

Jabrā is one of the greatest enthusiasts about the use of myth in poetry, and of the Tammūz myth in particular. In the preface to his first volume of prose poetry, Tammūz fi 'l-Madīnah, he referred to "his symbols of destruction, disintegration and death"[122] in his diwan, which he said, filled him with terror; "they summarize for me the past few years, when I... was looking for the sources of fertility..." The deliberateness in this search reflects Jabrā's strong cultural background and portrays his deep admiration for the "mythical method". The use of the Tammūz myth in his poetry, however, is implicit, and very much informed, in places, by Eliot's style:

وفي المحل حلمنا بالربيع
اشهرا حمرى طوال
واستحثثنا بالمطر
ولم ننم - نستصرخ العشق القديم
ولما امطرت ، كان المطر
وآلماه ، دمعا ودم .

123

But the initial despair is relieved by faith in an imminent rebirth:

فاضت الانهر بالجاجم
ولكن في الربيع اتقطفنا الشقيق ودمنا السنابل .

124

the mention of the anemones is a direct allusion to the mythical belief that anemones are the blood of the slain god, Tammūz.

It was Jabrā, too, who gave the group of poets employing the Tammūz myth the name of "Al-Shu'arā' al-Tammūziyyūn",[125] and took great pains to explain the universal and deep significance of this myth, not only in its primordial phase but also in its later phases when it had become the product of more sophisticated minds.

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* Two points must be mentioned here. The first is that, although the Tammūz myth originated in the Middle East, it is no longer really alive in the people, on a general scale. This is so, despite the fact that the legend of al-Mahdi and the tragedy of al-Ḥusain impinge on it to a degree. The second point is that this particular myth eventually came to be exhausted by Arab poets. It was used in its many forms and names (Tammūz, Ba'l, Adonis, even the phoenix) by several poets so that it quickly lost its lustre. Poems which directly employ the myth became heavily repetitious, and it would be extremely embarrassing now to write such a poem which directly employs this myth.

In his prose poetry he himself elaborated on the myth, using it often as a background, a structural basis for various themes. An extract from his poem, "Kharazat al-Bi'r" elucidates this:

خـــرزة البـــئر لنا جلجلـــة ثانيـــة
من ثنرها الخصيب ستنطلـــق
الحمم السوداء لاميـــة لاظيـــة
بلحم الصبايا والحبالى لتبيـــد
زارعـــي المـــوت • 126

This is the well in which the Zionists buried the dead bodies of several hundred men, women and children slain in the massacre of Dayr Yāsīn, Palestine, on April 9th, 1948. A prophecy that death will give birth to life and revolution informs Jabrā's poem, as it informs other poems on the subject.[127]

An interesting relationship is brought forward here between the Tammūz myth and that of the suffering, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, for the burial well becomes Golgothah whose 'holy' overflow will revive our villages. This will become a symbol of great immediacy in modern Arabic poetry.

Another poet who employed the Tammūz myth and its variations was Khalīl Ḥāwi. His approach is often direct and deliberate:

يا آلـــه الخصب ، يا بعلا يفـــض
التربة العاقر يا شمس الحصيـــد
يا الها ينفض القـــبر ويا نصحا مجيـــد
انت يا تمـــوز ، يا شمـــس الحصيـــد • 128

His whole diwan, Nahr al-Ramād, revolves around the Tammūz myth, emphasising, on the one hand, the aridity of the spirit which dominates the poet's world, its disintegration, its sterility, and its stupor, and on the other, the imminent revival of life and virility. His lovely poem, "Al Jisr", is an excellent example of this prophecy of a renaissance, effected, however, by the rising generation:

يعبرون الجســـر في الصبح خفافـــا
اضلعي امتدت لهم جسرا وطيـــد
من كهـــوف الشرق ، من مستنقع الشرق الى الشرق الجديد 129

Ḥāwi's poetry is greatly informed by the archetypal idea of the resurrection of a nation after death and the revival of a civilisation. However, his last diwan, Bayādir al-Jū', as its title implies, shows the

break down of faith, for the three poems which make the diwan all end on a note of despair:

130 هيهات يعرف من انا ، عبثا ، محال
شمطاء تنبش في المزابل عن قشور البرتقال

or at least of desperate impatience:

131 هذى العقارب لا تدور
رباه كيف تمط ارجلها الدقائق
كيف تجمد تستحيل الى عصور !

In his long poem, "La'āzar 'Ām 1962", Lazarus is resurrected by Christ but is unable to represent any but a dead face and heart to the living, eventually dragging them down with him to a dead and barren existence. The over-diluted poem is haunted with dark visions and decked with images of corruption, sterility, rancour and stagnation. However, passages of great artistic beauty are scattered throughout and help to alleviate the artistically gloomy and otherwise ineffectual longer passages. Khalīl Ḥāwi's poetry, almost in its entirety, is poetry of the archetype, which he deliberately seeks. His adoption of the Sandabād, the archetypal figure of the rover in quest of knowledge, will be mentioned shortly.

The fifth poet of the Tammūz group of poets is Adūnīs. His deliberate choice of this pen-name already shows his basic involvement with the spirit of the myth of Tammūz or Adonis which is its Greek synonym. However, Adūnīs varied on this particular myth employing, in "Al-Ba'th wa 'l-Ramād", his best direct poem on the idea of spiritual resurrection after death, the myth of the phoenix. This is the legendary bird described by Philip de Thaun in his Anglo-Norman twelfth-century Bestiary as

> very elegant and handsome; it is found in Arabia, and is shaped like a swan; no man can seek so far as to find another on the earth; it is only one in the world, and is all purple; it lives five hundred years and more... When it perceives age coming on, it goes and collects twigs, and precious spice of good odour; as leaves it takes them, and spreads itself upon them; by the sun's ray it takes the pure fire (of the heaven); voluntarily it spreads its wings over them; these it burns of its own will, and is reduced to powder. By the fire of the spice, by the good ointment- of the heat and humour the powder takes sweetness, and such is its nature, as the writing says, on the third day it comes to life again.[132]

Its miraculous birth can also be compared to the virgin birth of Christ. The myth embodies intimations of immortality and the idea of resurrection and life after death.

Adūnīs uses the myth in this last sense. Living and experiencing the contemporary Arab existence, Adūnīs saw in the chaos, the anxiety, the despair, the disillusionment of a whole generation a good reason for a sacrificial death that brings redemption, so that life can regain its force and focus. It is the same theme repeated all over again in a different form, which revolves around the regaining and re-possessing of life through death:

فينيق تلك لحظة انبعاثك الجديد
صار شبه الرماد صار شررا ولهبا كواكبيا
والربيع دب في الجذور ·

133

a direct though subtle link here with the vegetation myth of Tammūz.[134] If al-Sayyāb's "Unshūdat al-Maṭar" is dominated by the image of water, this poem by Adūnīs is dominated by the image of fire: "حتى الغبار لهب"[135] "احلم ان رئتي جمرة".[136] To embrace the fire, the conflagration, is to burn to life, to lead the way: "فخلني ... احتضن الحريق ـ اغيب في الحريق فينيق يا فينيق ـ يا رائد الطريق".[137] The fire is also a starry flame, "لهب كواكبي",[138] a light which must burn in order to exist at all: "مثل قبس ان لم يضئ يموت".[139] The image of fire in this poem harks back to Sufi poetry which Adūnīs seems to have learnt in his childhood, spent in the Alawite mountains, where learned Alawites are known to memorise and declaim Sufi poetry.[140]

In his use of the myth of the phoenix Adūnīs is direct and deliberate. It is an interesting poem combining several experiences of the poet into one harmonious whole. The poem is divided into four sections and develops to a climax of hope and faith in revival and redemption. Although it does not arrive at the poetic power and effectiveness of Adūnīs's later poetry, it has many of its basic attributes: the structural originality, the unusual imagery, and the mastery of language. The rhythmic scheme, which Khālidah Sa'īd finds so captivating in places,[141]

is not yet really distinctive, for it carries echoes of the rhythmic schemes of other poets such as Yūsuf al-Khal, writing at the same time. Later on, Adūnīs would find his own musical structures and would show great independence in his manipulation of rhythm in poetry, but not in this poem.

The burning of the phoenix is first associated in the poet's mind, we are told, with the burning to death of his father. Khālidah Sa'īd, the poet's wife, emphasises the importance of this event and its continuous impact on the poet's mind.[142] But the agony felt at such a tragedy cannot explain many passages in the poem, and it is absurd to presume that the clear references to the death of the hero in the poem point to the death of the poet's father. He talks directly of the death of a great man on the cross, a hero with great promise: "كان يرى بحيرة من كرز، حريقة حسن الضياء ، موعدا".[143] Death, however, is immediately defeated, for the dazzling light comes back soon, and hark: "وما له اجنحة بعدد الزهور في بلادنا".[144] Like the phoenix, and like Christ the source of Love, this hero is a redeemer of mankind:

مثلك يا فينيق مات حبه
علا ، احس جوعنا له ، فمات ، مات باسطا
جناحه ، محتضنا حتى الذي رمّده .[145]

The presence of the hero is not explained by Khālidah Sa'īd, but other critics, such as Rajā' al-Naqqāsh, understood it to refer to Anṭūn Sa'ādah, the founder of the Syrian Nationalist party, who was tried and executed overnight in Lebanon in 1949.[146] Al-Naqqāsh, however, wrongly linked the word 'fīnīq' (the phoenix) with 'fīnīqyā' (Phoenicia) the historical dream-land of the Syrian nationalists who aspired to revive its civilisation skipping the long period of Arab civilisation as irrelevant if not subversive. He bitterly attacked also, and here not without examples from the poem to back his argument, the poet's hopeful references to Carthage and Tyre, the famous ancient Phoenician ports:[147]

وخلني اشم فيها اللهب الهياكلي
ربما العصور فيها نعسة
وربما تجسدت قرطاجة[148]

The poem's political references are interesting to us only in that a poem might lose its immediate appeal if linked to a historical idea that is antipathetic to most. Adūnīs's poem has a kind of religious fervour that is rather exclusive and fails in parts to arrive at universality. The appeal to the phoenix leaves no scope for implication, but arrives at a direct and sometimes intellectual comparison:[149]

فينيق ، يا فينيـــــق
يا طائـــر الحنيـــن والحريـــق
يا ريشة صغيرة سائرة بلا رفيـــق [150]

The whole passage, stretching over two pages, is in the same vein, with an insistent calling on the phoenix in a manner that is unpoetic because it is too direct and demonstrative and even comical at times in its tone of veneration of the bird. This is hardly a fortunate approach to the use of myth in poetry. The attempt of Adūnīs, moreover, to achieve a synthesis of present and past also stumbles here, because he, unlike al-Sayyāb in his poem, "Fi 'l-Maghrib al-ʿArabi", fails to play on the sympathetic chord which links his readers, through emotional connotations that naturally captivate them, to a past which their consciousness recognises as the right background to their own present. Maud Bodkin says in this context:

> The archetype of rebirth, present in all nature and human life, and giving both foundation and expression to the perennial springing of human hope, can only be felt in power when the range of suggestion possible to poetic speech enables us to survey our present ills, pictured in vivid actuality, and yet in widest perspective of space and time.[151]

One must emphasise here, however, that it is not Adūnīs's description of our present ills which is inadequate, for he indeed excells in his recounting of them in the third section of the poem, but it is the impossibility, for most Arab readers, to survey these ills in the perspectives of time and space which Adūnīs allots for them: time, the Phoenician civilisation, and space, Tyre, Baʿlabak and Carthage. Because of the strong political connotations of these references at the time, the chord of sympathy is immediately severed, and the poem does not captivate

the spirit of most readers, or appeal to their inner sense of harmony with life's unchanging pattern through time. Bodkin quotes Plato as having warned against accepting myths with ease, saying that "though there is lure and enchantment in them, there is also hazard".[152] In Adūnīs's poem the hazard is most pronounced.

.....

As has already been mentioned, the cross and the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ came to be used as variations on the basic theme of the Tammūz myth. They were taken out of their Biblical context and made to signify something else, and were turned, even at the hands of Christian poets, into other sources of mythological symbolism. Thus Christ is made into an oversimplified symbol to represent the resurrection of a nation and the price of martyrdom it pays to achieve this resurrection. The basic idea of the crucifixion and the redemption is lost in the course of this representation. Adūnīs exclaims: " فينيـــق يا مسيح ، يا صليـــب ",[153] and Yūsuf al-Khāl says:

(ذراعاي مشدودتان الى صخـــرة
حنيني شديد الـى اخوتـــي) 154
ينهد فجـر النهـار جراحـي .
شراعي طليـــق ويومي عريق كأمسي
متـى يا ابـــي ،
متـى يا ابـــي ستجبر كأســـي

and in his famous poem, "Al-Masīḥ ba'd al-Ṣalb", al-Sayyāb provides a constant comparison between the plight of Christ and that of the Arab individual fighting for the freedom of his people: victimised, murdered, but victorious at the end:

بعد ان سمروني والقيت عيني نحو المدينـة
كدت لا اعرف السهل والسور والمقبرة : 155
كان شيء ، مدى ما ترى العين ،
كالغابـــة المزهـــرة ،
كان ، في كل مرمى ، صليب ، وام حزينـة .
قدس الرب ! هذا مخاض المدينـــــة .

Al-Sayyāb's ethnic instincts were most awake and alert, and he was able to Arabize almost all the myths he used. Christ and the Cross became, in his hands, a part of a human heritage no less Arab than anything else. In this he succeeded more than several other poets of his generation, whose adoption of themes, motifs and modes hence not used

in poetry, often reeked of affectation and lacked the authentic integration with a true experience.

The poets employing the Tammūz myth and its variations directly were not the only poets who approached the theme of rebirth after death. It may be said that this theme, more than any other theme in contemporary Arabic poetry, pervades the modern Arabic poem, especially in the fifties and early sixties. It was adopted, often without any reference or even knowledge of the myth of Tammūz and its variations, by most poets, including the conventional and the semi-conventional. But among the conscious users of the myth, it remains a phenomenal event that they should all react, as a group, to the same approach, and that the myth and its variations should be portrayed in many poems by several leading poets of the fifties, to express their mutual reaction to the Arab situation. Jung helps to illuminate the problem when he says that "The archetypal image of the wise man, the saviour or redeemer, ... is awakened whenever the times are out of joint".[156] Nevertheless, one feels a little uneasy at what seems to have become an infectious and fashionable practice among leading poets writing simultaneously within a very short period of time. It has been mentioned above that the Tammūz group of poets did not form a school of poetry in the late fifties, because of the diversity of the treatment of the myths at their hands.[157] The sixties showed this to be true, for their own personal experiences soon intervened to diversify even more emphatically their various poetic experiments.

.....

Apart from the myth of the fertility cult and the variations on it in the figures of Christ, the phoenix bird, and others, the modern poets used other myths and archetypal figures from history, with different interpretations of human experience. Sisyphus, Prometheus, Icarus, Ulyssus, Sandabād, Job, al-Ḥallāj and many others were employed.

The myth of Sisyphus has been exploited by the poets to denote the Arab man's or nation's constant strife. In the words of Albert Camus

> the Gods had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labour.[158]

Adūnīs and al-Sayyāb were among other poets who employed the myth. They played on the rich potential of the myth, inverting the preliminary significance of futile strife.[159] Adūnīs might have been influenced by Camus's interpretation of the meaning of strife. For to Camus, the "measured step" of Sisyphus towards "the torment of which he will never know the end" coincides with the moment of consciousness and

> At each of those moments when he leaves the heights and gradually sinks toward the lairs of the gods, he is superior to his fate. He is stronger than his rock.[160]

The conscious knowledge of powerlessness and rebellion, the refusal to admit defeat and collapse in the acceptance of the burden, informs Adūnīs's short poem, "Ilā Sīzīf" where he says:

اقسمت ان اظل مع سيزيف
اخضع للحتّى وللشرار • [161]

converting torture into an act of heroism and courage.

Al-Sayyāb's declaration at the end of one of his best poems that Sisyphus has thrown away his rock is another interesting and poignant conversion of the myth, more original than that of Adūnīs, if equally effective:

سيزيف القى عنه عبء الدهور
واستقبل الشمس على الاطلسي [162]

He is proclaiming here the valour of the Algerian struggle in the war of independence. Man is portrayed at the climax of his strength and victory, the very conqueror of a fate that has riddled him for centuries.

The motif of the Sisyphian struggle can be seen in the poetry of several poets, even without the explicit mention of the myth: " قدر محتومة رؤياه يا جيل العطاء".[163] In another poem, the rock, the burden of a whole generation, inevitably awaits the mountain climbers at the base:

فلن يضيع العبء منا ، سوف نلقاه بلا عناء [164]
متى رجعنا ، رابضا بين ظلال الآس والتفاح

او قابعا على الضفاف صامتا ، مسمرا عينيه
في وجهنا ، ومسندا خدا على كفيه
منتظرا رجوعنا المحتوم كي يدق في مفاصل الجناح
مسماره السحيق او يلسف ساعديه
على بقايا عرسنا المباح

the burden lurking between death and an impossible harvest. Death here is exemplified by " الآس ", a folklorish reference to the Damascene usage of carrying the myrtle to the graves of the dead, and the promised, unattainable fruit as exemplified by the apple.[165]

The myth of Prometheus, "the fire bearing Titan god" who stole fire from the gods for the benefit of mankind, is another great influence on modern Arabic poetry. At the root of this myth is:

> the sublime conception of the passage from slavery to freedom, of the spirit which refuses any longer to remain the unquestioning slave of the caprices of a tyrant and demands to obey no power but that which is the embodiment of ... justice, that whose service is perfect freedom and the fullness of life.[166]

Modern Arab poets have not written a special work on this mythical seeker of progress and freedom, as did Shelley and Goethe in modern times, but the spirit of the myth permeates much of the poetic expression in the last two decades. At a period of search for redemption from the unbearable political and social situation, the fortitude and the sustained willful struggle of Prometheus seems to be most fit. If Sisyphus stands side by side with Prometheus in modern Arabic poetry, it should not be regarded as an attempt to reconcile opposites, but as a recognition of the hopeful belief that behind the inevitable bearing of a terrible burden, there is a fortitude that will conquer and achieve the glory of man.[167]

The unconscious emergence of myth from reality in periods of crisis is seen in al-Bayyāti's early work, Abārīq Muhashshamah, where the archetypal figure of the rover is delineated in several poems.[168] The dream of departure from a land of misery and oppression has been a constant motif in modern Arabic poetry[169] and is not lacking in the Classical.[170] However, in this diwan, the dream of departure becomes almost archetypal, prefiguring the use by other poets of the archetypal figure of Sandabād,

the courageous merchant who roams the world and braves unimaginable dangers in quest of treasures. However, al-Bayyāti's travellers do not have a grand quest in mind, but are expressive of the general anxiety which permeated Arab life at the time, and the feeling that it would be impossible to accept it as it really was. They go out without belief, but with a nostalgic yearning to come back. Other poets have depicted the personality of the rover. Tawfīq Ṣāyigh's traveller, a man without a passport,[171] is more akin to Odysseus who was constricted, by a malignant power, to depart, "driven about the Mediterranean by the winds of the angered god, Poseidon".[172]

In his book, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, Joseph Campbell describes the departure of the hero on his mythological journey:

> This first stage of the mythological journey - which we have designated the "call to adventure" - signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown. This fateful region of both treasure and danger may be variously represented: as a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves, or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountaintop, or profound dream state; but it is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight.[173]

A very apt description not only of Ulysses, whom Campbell mentions, but even more so of the Arabic Sandabād. Several poets used the myth of Sandabād to signify a search for an important aspect of life. In Khalīl Ḥāwi it signifies the search for the resources of oneself, for the fountains of strength and self-knowledge. His poem, "Al-Sandabād fī Riḥlatihi 'l-Thāminah" tells the story of this quest and of the conflicts, suffering, torture and finally of the conscious realisation of imminent victory and the possible achievement of great aims. Because the poet is dominated by the central idea of the Tammūz myth, that of resurrection after death, the Tammūzian motif permeates the poem:

كان الكفن الابيض درعا [174]
تحته يختصر الربيع

The poem ends on a line of hope and faith: "وعدت اليكم شاعرا في فمه بشارة",[175] bringing in the good tidings of a rejuvenated life to the nation, not only

for his house, but for millions of houses:

ملیـــون دار مثل داری ودار
تزهو باطفال غصون الكرم
والزيتـــون ، جمر الربيـــع [176]

the coming generation being assured of its future possession of a worthwhile life.

Al-Sayyāb, however, in his poem "Raḥala 'l-Nahār", curtailed the myth. His quest was a cure for his sick body. He must have written the poem at a moment of despair and anguish, for it is a defeated Sandabād who is singing so heart-breakingly here of the impossibility of return:

اوما علمت بانه اسرتسه آلهـة البحـار
في قلعة سوداء في جزر من الدم والمعار.
هو لـن يعـــود ،
رحـــل النهار
فلترحلي ، هو لـن يعود . [177]

Despite the touching mood of the poem and its authentic expression of a tragic situation, the poet's use of the archetypal figure here is not very successful, for it does not complete the Sandabād cycle of adventure and achievement, nor does it give us, as does his inversion of the Sisyphus myth, an equally vital alternative. Moreover, the poet does not succeed in raising the poem to a level of communal experience that could give the necessary weight and significance to a myth in which the archetypal figure is heroic. One can accept the adoption of archetypes of suffering (Job, Sisyphus) to signify a personal experience on the part of the poet, because there is a great scope for self-identification on the part of the reader with them. But a personal adoption by the poet of the archetypes of heroism can give the reader a very uneasy feeling, and may be detrimental to the poem. Al-Sayyāb's adoption of the myth of the Sandabād above, however, although personal, is acceptable emotionally, because it embodies no heroic self-extollment. But, as has been said, it is not the best representation of the use of myth in poetry. 'Izziddīn, however, strangely chose this poem to illustrate the use of the Sandabād myth by modern poets. [178]

Al-Sayyāb, at the end of his short and tragic life, succumbed to the horrible fate, the terrifying force of death that, for him, had existed right from the beginning: his drowned sailor, his mother's rain-drenched

grave, the numerous victims, dead and dying, of an unjust society. Death was everywhere in his poetry. But with it, when he was in his prime and even later, so long as he was able to hope and dream, there was also the cycle of fertility, taken according to his own whim from the treasures of mythology and from other literatures, but alive and a creed in its own right. The movement towards vitality and reproduction carried itself rhythmically throughout his work, combining death and fertility with love, producing love and fertility and life from death. This was nature's seasonal cycle: impregnation, fruit bearing, then the harvest and fallowness. And this was the myth which fascinated him most. But the poet could never sustain this fascination when death extended its irrevocable hold on him. Then everything also surrendered.

This is why Sandabād is such a defeated figure in this poem, and this is why the greatest archetypal figure which accompanied the years of degeneration in physical power is Job. The Job story lives among the Arab people and its appropriation in poetry furnishes a unifying cultural factor. The popular Arab concept of Job is that of an archetype of suffering, patience and faith. Mixed with Islamic abandon to God's will, it neglects Job's final triumph in picking up his life. It is, in the popular Arab version, the story of the triumph of faith, and obodience to the ever merciful Will of God. Al-Sayyāb did not abandon this theme: his adoption of the Job story is personal and suited to his own experience, and is not meant to be a story of man's suffering through intolerable pain and his final triumph, the triumph of a suffering hero "picking up his life again", as Archibald MacLeish, speaking about his use of the Job story in his verse play, J.B., (1956) puts it. He adds :

> The myth of Job is a myth for our time because this is our answer also: the answer that moves so many of us who, without the formal beliefs that supported our ancestors, nevertheless pick up our lives again after these vast disasters and go on - go on as men.[179]

This idealism could not have been relevant to al-Sayyāb's experience at the time. The hope that he, like Job, might be cured, accompanied him

for some time: " ..سينزع الاحزان من قلبي ، وينزع الداء ، فأرجي الدواء ، ارجي العصا "[180] but this was also a natural feeling of hope, common to most men in the same circumstances, and not a constructed ideal picture based on the faith in the capacity of man to overcome his disasters and triumph over them. Fate now was irrevocably placed in the mighty hand of God. Hope at the very end was discovered to be an impossibility " ما ارتجيه هو المحال "[181] and death was craved from God: " رصاصة الرحمة يا آلهي "[182] and:

183 ولو استجاب الله صرخة ذي بلوى لصحت : "وخير ما فيها
موت يجيء كأنه ينبوعة ويمس آلامي فينتهيا"

written in Kuwait one and a half months before his death.

.....

It would be impossible to discuss here every variety of myth and archetype used in modern Arabic poetry. However, since this chapter concentrates mainly on technique, a further examination of the use of myth and archetype by Adūnīs should be appropriate.

Adūnīs has several attributes which make his frequent use of myth and archetype a natural outcome. First, he has a cosmic sensibility, a sensibility which Jabrā, however, finds marred by an ego-centric attitude in which the "narcissistic self, enlarged by mystical ecstacy, becomes the whole universe."[184] Secondly, Adūnīs's is a vision of sustained mystical tendencies, often enhanced by fervour. Thirdly, he has a conscious feeling of time. In a universal sense, he has the feeling of the continuous progression from past to present to future in which all of man's experience throughout history is unified, proving the endless capacity of human experience for reproducing itself. In a personal sense, a wistful note is detected, for his pre-occupation with time explains also his pre-occupation with death, the correlative of time and, in a strict and individual application, its very enemy.[185] The two attitudes - where time is shown to be endless in terms of human experience exemplified by the resurrection of several archetypal personalities from the past and their projection onto the present; and where time, in terms of personal experience, shows the vulnerability of man's fate through death - are blended together to give charm and poignancy to several poems.

Adūnīs's historical sense might have been influenced by Perse's similar sense of the past. In his speech of acceptance of the Nobel prize in Stockholm, 1960, Perse said: "In spite of himself, the poet is also tied to historical events. Nothing in the drama of his times is alien to him",[186] thus stressing the "permanence and the unity of Being". Perse's Anabase, moreover, is a mythical poem which has

> a mythic sense of race, of rootage in the soil, of space as the area in which man moves and settles, of matter as the quarry of his building stones, of time as the cycle of seasons shot through with a firm line of communal action in the erection of cities... /All this/ conduces to an archetypal image, concretely and movingly envisaged, of the human caravan as massively operative in man's collective prehistory.[187]

Adūnīs has shown in the poetry he published in the sixties, an increasing pre-occupation with the past, which seems to him a constant adventure of discovery (his continuous attempts, for example, at discovering the possible effectiveness in a poetic medium of such personages from the Islamic past as al-Ḥallāj, al-Naffari, al-Ghazzāli,* ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Dākhil and others). However, in this pre-occupation, he tends sometimes to forget about the present, losing touch with his own age. Jabrā has noticed that the attempt of Adūnīs to discover the balance between the Middle Ages and our age has thrown him into confusion:

> His vision... shakes under its mystical weight, fails to get rid of the traditionalism which it rejects, and stumbles over generalizations, hardly reaching the heart of the contemporary city with its metaphysical and psychological problems except in a round about way, and in referring several times to revolution... But his rejection is carried out in Romantic fashion, and in its pride and self-elevation we miss a real sympathy with people in their... experience of all that makes life worthy of patience and endurance. No matter how we admire the wonderful style, a doubt haunts us that the threads connected with our age are weak.[188]

Actually, the feeling of unreality does not lie in the mystical quality of the poetry, nor does it lie in generalizations. Our age, like every other age, has to yield to generalizations. The link which Adūnīs draws, moreover, between man in this age and man in other historical ages is valid as a principle, but it is betrayed in his poetry by his sustained

*Al-Husain al-Hallāj (d.922), Muḥammad al-Naffari (d.965) and Muhammad al-Ghazzāli (d.1111) are the three famous mytics.

insistence on drawing his own image as that of man in this age, in all the diversity of his experience. Jabrā has criticised severely Adūnīs's attempt at unifying all those "hero-symbols" in one person, that of the poet, for this means

> the running away from the real meaning of each, making of the synthetic personality an artificial one, which cannot have a meaning of integrated values and dimensions.[189]

The poet cannot be all these archetypal personalities from history, mythology and literature at the same time. The great mixture, in the personality of the poet-hero, of all that which is symbolic, in archetypal fashion, of man's endeavour, wisdom, fortitude, courage and conflict, gives the reader a feeling of uneasiness. What makes it more poignant is the lack of either humility or humour in the poetry.

Jabrā insists that there is a conscious intellectual attempt which Adūnīs violently imposes on his intuitive feelings.[190] But the same feeling of a conscious attempt to incorporate the myth in poetry is often detected in Jabrā's own prose poetry. Very few archetypal poems have yet succeeded in escaping this fate. In an experimental age of discovery and conscious endeavour, one must expect, to a degree, this phenomenon among poets.

Modern avant-garde poetry in Arabic is, on the whole, a poetry of the archetype, influenced greatly by the modern discoveries in the realm of psychological patterns and the role of myth in the human subconscious. A metaphysical concept of the formidability of man's endeavour, his tenacity in the face of archetypal punishment and suffering, his love of heroism, his deep realisation of the inevitability of oppression, and his sustained rejection of it, came to be interpreted in more universal methods by the modern Arab poets, and whether the myths have been explicit or implicit, the spirit of modern poetry is permeated with them. This is one of the greatest achievements of modern Arabic poetry, and it should be allowed to develop, even at the expense of some originality and spontaneity.

For it is the means to touch the core of history, and it is through poetry that it will be possible to unify the present moment in Arab existence (a moment of crisis indeed) with the many moments of crisis in history. It will unify man's endurance and universalise the present Arab struggle with the struggle of man everywhere, and at all times.

Footnotes

1. E.M.W. Tillyard, Poetry, Direct and Oblique, London, 1959, p.63; however, he does not mention the word poetic; see also E. Wilson, Axel's Castle, p.20.

2. Ibid.

3. Poetic Process, p.171.

4. Op.cit., pp.200-1.

5. Axel's Castle, pp.21-2.

6. See I. Ismā'īl, "Al-Shā'ir wa 'l-Madīnah", op.cit., pp.325-49; see also Jalīl Kamāl al-Dīn, Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth wa Rūḥ 'l-'Aṣr, where he discusses this aspect in several places; see for example his discussion of the Village in al-Bayyāti's poetry, pp.35-55 and of the Village and City in al-Sayyāb's, pp.193-231, etc. For Aḥmad Ḥijāzi's rejection of the City, see Madīnah bilā Qalb, which has several poems in this vein.

7. The examples are on pp.27, 54 and 67 respectively; see also the introduction to his poem, "Nidā' al-Baḥr", a poem in three which includes "Al-'Audah", p.64.

8. Tillyard, op.cit., p.65.

9. The wind, a symbol of freedom and vitality, frequently occurs in K. Ḥāwi's poetry: "للريح موسمها الخريف", Al-Nāy wa 'l-Rīḥ, p.31; it also occurs in the poetry of several other poets, e.g. Khalīl Khouri's verse: "بحقل عام وسرت ريح من الغابات تدعو الميتين", from his poem, "Ṣalawāt li 'l-Rīḥ" in his diwan of the same name, published at Beirut, 1963, p.143; also Fu'ād Rifqah's verse: "ايها العاشق الجديد الذي ينبي بالريح بانفجار السحابة", from his poem, "Mulūk al-Siḥr", Ḥanīn al-'Atabah, Beirut, 1965, p.62.

10. Bayādir al-Jū', pp.19-33; see especially the introduction to the poem.

11. Rasā'il min London, pp.41-6.

12. P.32.

13. Ibid., p.26.

14. Ibid., p.33.

15. P.42.

16. Ibid., p.44.

17. Shaẓāyā wa Ramād, pp.60-6.

18. Al-Qaṣīdah Kāf.

19. The Creative Experiment, p.10.

20. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, under ALLUSION; E. Tillyard links it with literature: "a reference, conscious or unconscious, to a passage in literature", op.cit., p.67.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, loc.cit.; see also Tillyard, op.cit., p.69, where he says: "Writers allude, not always with any notion of specific relevance, but in order to proclaim that they are fully aware of the tradition."

24. Ibid., where the Classical epic is mentioned; and Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, loc.cit., where Alexandrian and Mediaeval poetry are mentioned.

25. Ibid.

26. From his poem, "Al-Maghāwīr", ʿA'idūn, Beirut, 1959, p.22.

27. From his poem, "Al-Arsūzi", Aʿāsīr fi 'l-Salāsil, p.152.

28. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, loc.cit.

29. Tillyard, loc.cit.; see also Grover Smith, T.S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays, a Phoenix book, sixth impression, Chicago, 1965, p.60.

30. Tillyard, op.cit., p.71; see A. Huxley, Literature and Science, London, 1963, p.26, where he says that literary allusion "is a device for expressing life's multiple meanings".

31. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, loc.cit.; see also Tillyard, op.cit., p.68.

32. Ibid., p.71.

33. A very good example is Nizār Qabbāni's poem "Al-Ḥubb wa 'l-Bitrūl", Habībati, pp.164-71, a modern poem written in direct statement and employing obliquity only in the poet's use of allusive material referring to notorious behaviour pattern of a certain type of affluent men in the Arab world, as well as to current political events.

34. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, loc.cit.

35. For more on unconscious allusion see Tillyard, op.cit., pp.67-8.

36. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, loc.cit.

37. On Eliot's use of allusion see Tillyard, op.cit., p.72 et seq.; G. Smith, his chapter, "Memory and Desire in 'The Waste Land'", op.cit., pp.72-98; see especially p.60 et seq.; see also I.A. Richards in an extract from his essay, "The Poetry of T.S. Eliot", published in A Collection of Critical Essays on "The Waste Land", ed. Jay Martin, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968, pp.44-5.

38. On Eliot's influence on al-Bayyāti in this context, see I. ʿAbbās, Al-Bayyāti, pp.24-5.

39. From his poem, "Al-Bāb al-Muḍā'", Abārīq Muhashshamah, p.118.

40. From his poem, "Al-Barīd al-ʿĀ'id", Al-Majd li 'l-Aṭfāl wa 'l-Zaitūn, p.70.

41. From his poem, "Vīt Mīn", Abārīq Muhashshamah, p.24.

42. From his poem, "Al-Ḥadīqah 'l-Mahjūrah", ibid., p.94.

43. ʿAbbās refers this passage solely to Shelley's poem, op.cit., p.25.

44. From his poem, "Sūq al-Qaryah", Abārīq Muhashshamah, p.35; in fact this abounds with proverbs, " زرعوا ولم تأكل " and " ما حك جلدك مثل ظفرك ", ibid.; and " لن يصلح العطار ما قد افسد الدهر " and " ابدا على اشكالها تقع الطيور ", p.36.

45. From his poem, "Al-Bāb al-Muḍā'", p.116.

46. Ibid.

47. From his poem, "Vīt Mīn", p.25; however, the phrase " الحرية الحمراء " has become over familiar, which makes it lose its allusive power; on over familiarity of passages see Tillyard, op.cit., p.71 where he says, "Very familiar passages tend to get isolated from their context and to become more a portion of speech than of literature. They get encrusted with stock associations and refuse to ramify as passages will when they are thought of in a very rich context."

48. From his poem, "Al-Malja' al-'Ishrūn", Abārīq Muhashshamah, p.13; this is an exemplary allusion. The words " ما زلنا بخير " are an ironical comment on the allusion supplying an additional significance relating to the standpoint which the poet wishes to put forward.

49. From his poem, "Abārīq Muhashshamah", ibid., p.10.

50. Pp.9-10. On al-Bayyāti's use of allusion see 'Abbās's short description, op.cit., pp.24-5.

51. Op.cit., p.71.

52. From his poem, "Gharīb 'ala 'l-'Ayn", Al-Madār al-Mughlaq, pp.60-1.

53. From the present writer's poem, "Bilā Judhūr", Al-'Audah min al-Nab' al-Hālim, p.146-60, this poem has various allusions: to folk songs, "بلدتي يا عالية وبراس تلـــــة", from a folk song sung in Safad in Galilee beginning with this verse: "صفد يا عالية وبراس تلة"; and to national anthems, "يا بريطانيا العظمى، لا تقولي الفتح طاب، سوف تأتيك الليالي، نورمـــــا لمع الحراب". See also other poems in the same volume; e.g. "Ba'd al-Jazr", pp.75-9 where several Quranic allusions are used; "Adhru' al-Kattān", pp.167-78 where the allusion to the crow on p.167 refers to Classical usage in poetry as well as to current usage; see also the allusion to folk keening in the refrain " واشترونى يارجالي، مشترى اليوم غالي"; see also "Mandhūrūn", pp.184-9 where the allusion to Eliot's "The Hollow Men" on p.196 is also noted in the appendix on pp.205-6; etc.

54. Muḥyi 'l-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabi, Tarjumān al-Ashwāq, trans. and ed. R.A. Nicholson, London, 1911, from poem XIII, p.20.

55. Ibid., p.119.

56. Ibid., p.73.

57. Ibid., p.134.

58. See Dīwān Khalīl Mardam Bek, p.35; Dīwān al-Raṣāfi, p.183; Dīwān al-Zahāwi, p.121; and Dīwān al-Kāẓimi, p.40.

59. From his poem, "Raḥīl al-Aḥibbah", Dīwān al-Akhṭal al-Ṣaghīr, p.187; see also p.224.

60. From his poem, "Al-Ānisah M...", Layāli 'l-Raqmatain, p.31.

61. From his poem, "Ḥamalatnī naḥwa 'l-Ḥimā Ashjāni", Dīwān Ibrāhīm, p.106.

62. From his poem, "Iqbāl wa 'l-Lail", Iqbāl, p.59.

63. Dīwān Rashīd Nakhlah, p.72; see also p.48 et passim.

64. From his poem, "Khubz wa Ḥashīsh wa Qamar", Qaṣā'id min Nizār Qabbāni, p.178.

65. From his poem, "Maqtal Ṣabiy", Madīnah bilā Qalb, p.94.

66. From his poem, "Sifr Ayyūb", Manzil al-Aqnān, pp.37-8.

67. For 'Arīḍah's poem, see Arwāḥ Hā'irah, pp.178-97; for Abū Mādi's poem, see above, pp.224-5; for al-'Aqqād's article, see pp.28-30 of Al-Fusūl; for Abū Shādi's attempts, see above p.153; for al-'Ināni's article, see Apollo, October, 1932, Vol.I, ii, 113-24; for Nu'aimah's article, see above, p.153; for 'Abqar, see above pp.151 and 153; for Arwāḥ wa Ashbāḥ, see above pp.153 and 558-9; for Gibrān's "Liqā'", see above, p.153. See also Jabrā's translation entitled, Adūnīs, Dirāsah fi 'l-Asāṭīr wa 'l-Adyān al-Sharqiyyah al-Qadīmah; see also 'Ayyād's book Al-Baṭal fi 'l-Adab wa 'l-Asāṭīr.

68. Under MYTH.

69. Quoted, ibid.

70. P.81.

71. Ibid., p.76.

72. Ibid., p.82.

73. Elizabeth Drew, T.S. Eliot, the Design of his Poetry, New York, 1949, p.12; interpreting Jung.

74. Ibid., pp.6-7.

75. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, loc.cit, interpreting Jung.

76. Drew, op.cit., p.9.

77. Ibid., p.10.

78. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, loc.cit.

79. Ibid.

80. "Yeats", Selected Prose, p.201.

81. See "Ulysses, Order, and Myth", The Dial, Chicago, November, 1923, p.480.

82. Ibid., p.483. See also Drew, op.cit., pp.2-5.

83. Ibid., p.14.

84. See J.G. Frazer, The Golden Bough, an abridged ed., second printing, Vol.I, London, 1960, p.426 et seq.

85. Ibid., p.427.

86. Ibid., p.428.

87. See Eliot's "Notes on The Waste Land", The Waste Land, London, 1961, p.43.

88. Ibid.; see Drew's discussion of this, op.cit., pp.60-2.

89. Ibid., p.66.

90. Ibid., pp.63-4.

91. Ibid., p.65.

92. "Unshūdat al-Maṭar", p.164.

93. Ibid., p.166.

94. "تسقي من ترابها وتشرب المطر", ibid., p.161.

95. Ibid., p.163.

96. Ibid., p.141.

97. Ibid., p.143.

98. Ibid., p.142.

99. Ibid., p.144.

100. Ibid., p.142.

101. Ibid., p.106.

102. Ibid., p.105.

103. Ibid., p.107.

104. From his poem, "Jaikūr Shābat", written in 1962, Al-Ma'bad al-Gharīq, pp.141-2; see also other poems by him, such as "Jaikūr wa Ashjār al-Madīnah" and "Jaikūr Ummi", both written in 1963, Shanāshīl, pp.51-3 and 77-80 respectively; and such poems as "Al-Qinn wa 'l-Majarrah", written in 1963 and "Risālah" written in 1964, where he mentions Jaikūr with nostalgia, Iqbāl, pp.23 and 48 respectively.

105. Unshūdat al-Matar, pp.82-3.

106. Ibid., p.83.

107. Ibid.

108. Ibid., p.84.

109. See ibid., the passage on p.85.

110. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, loc.cit, on Perse's Anabasis.

111. In Al-Ādāb's regular feature, "Qara'tu 'l-'Adad al-Māḍi min Al-Ādāb", April, 1956, p.63.

112. P.89.

113. From his poem, "Lima yā Turā", Al-Bi'r al-Mahjūrah, p.20.

114. From his poem, "Al-Ḍayā' ", ibid., pp.24-5.

115. From his poem, "Al-Bi'r al-Mahjūrah", ibid., p.36.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid., p.39.

118. See J.I. Jabrā, "Al-Mafāzah wa 'l-Bi'r wa 'l-Lāh", Al-Ḥurriyyah wa 'l-Ṭūfān, pp.33-4.

119. From his poem, "Al-Judhūr", Al-Bi'r al-Mahjūrah, p.42.

120. Ibid.

121. "Al-Mafāzah wa 'l-Bi'r wa 'l-Lāh", p.31.

122. P.8.

123. From his poem, "Qaṣīdah", ibid., p.53; see As'ad Razzūq, Al-Usṭūrah fi 'l-Shi'r al-Mu'āṣir, Beirut, 1959, p.97, where he notices the great influence of Eliot on Jabrā.

124. From his prose poem, "Ughniyah li Muntaṣaf al-Qarn", Tammūz fi 'l-Madīnah, p.43.

125. "Al-Mafāzah wa 'l-Bi'r wa 'l-Lāh", p.34 et passim.

126. Tammūz fi 'l-Madīnah, p.69.

127. See also a poem by the present writer, "Al-Shahīd al-Mahjūr", Al-'Audah min al-Nab' al-Hālim, pp.68-74, where the tragedy is pictured as an incentive:

لتوقظ في حنايانا
شموس الغيب والانواء
لتشعل روح موتانا
من الغيبوبة الصفراء
وتنفض شوقنا نارا وطوفانا

p.74

128. From his poem, "Ba'da 'l-Jalīd", Nahr al-Ramād, p.91.

129. From his poem, "Al-Jisr", ibid., p.138.

130. From his poem, "Jinniyyatu 'l-Shāṭi'", Bayādir al-Jū', p.33.

131. From his poem, "Al-Kahf", ibid., p.15.

132. Brand's Dictionary of Faiths and Folklore, Vol.II, London, 1905, under Phoenix.

133. Awrāq fi 'l-Rīḥ, p.80.

134. See also ibid., pp. 78-9.

135. Ibid., p.81.

136. Ibid.

137. Ibid., p.82.

138. Ibid., p.80.

139. Ibid., p.81.

140. See Khālidah Sa'īd, "Al-Maut Ṭarīqan ila 'l-Ḥayāt", Al-Baḥth 'an al-Judhūr, p.92.

141. Ibid., p.97.

142. Ibid., pp.92-4.

143. P.65.

144. Ibid.

145. Ibid., p.66.

146. "Al-Qaumiyyūn al-Sūriyyūn wa 'l-Adab", Adab wa 'Urūbah wa Ḥurriyyah, pp.60-1.

147. See ibid., pp.66 and 75-8.

148. P.81.

149. See Khālidah Sa'īd, op.cit., p.95 where she alludes to this trait although evading a frank statement.

150. P.72.

151. Maud Bodkin, Studies in Type-Images, London, 1951, p.158.

152. Ibid., p.150.

153. "Al-Ba'th wa 'l-Ramād", p.78.

154. From his poem, "Al-Taubah", Qaṣā'id fi 'l-Arba'īn, p.73.

155. From his poem, "Al-Masīḥ ba'd al-Ṣalb", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.149.

156. Modern Man in Search of a Soul, trans. by W.S. Dell and C.F. Baynes, London, 1933, p.197.

157. See above, p.962.

158. The Myth of Sisyphus, trans. by Justin O'Brien, New York, 1955, p.119

159. See above p.962.

160. Op.cit., p.121.

161. From his poem, "Ilā Sīzīf", Aghāni Mihyār, p.127.

162. From his poem, "Risālah min Maqbarah", Unshūdat al-Maṭar, p.81.

163. From the poem of the present writer, "Marthiyyat al-Shuhadā'", Al-'Audah min al-Nab' al-Hālim, p.103.

164. From the present writer's poem, "Mandhūrūn", ibid., pp.184-5.

165. See ibid., the appendix.

166. John Baily, "Prometheus in Poetry", The Continuity of Letters, p.105.

167. Jalīl Kamāl al-Dīn in his book, Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth wa Rūḥ al-'Asr, interprets most modern poetic experience in terms of Sisyphian or Promethean struggle; although this is one way of looking at some examples of modern poetry, it is not always applicable or helpful if adhered to in all cases; see also 'Izziddīn Ismā'īl's criticism of his method, Al-Shi'r al-'Arabi 'l-Mu'āṣir, p.205.

168. See for example his poems "Musāfir bilā Ḥaqā'ib" "Al-Affāq", "Al-Quraṣān", "Intiẓār", "Al-Raḥīl al-Awwal", "Fi 'l-Manfā", "Al-Malja' al-'Ishrūn"; see also Iḥsān 'Abbās's discussion of this point, Al-Bayyāti, pp.43-51.

169. See above p.959 n.

170. Al-Mutanabbi is a very good example; his famous verse is typical of this:

وما منزل اللذات عندي بمنزل اذا لم ابجل عنده واكـــــرم

171. See poem No.24 in Al-Qasīdah Kāf.

172. Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, fourth printing, New York, 1962, p.58.

173. Ibid.

174. Al-Nāy wa 'l-Rīḥ, p.88.

175. Ibid., p.110; see also Ḥusain Fawzi's ample account of al-Sandabād in Ḥadīth al-Sandabād al-Qadīm, Cairo, 1943.

176. Ibid., p.103.

177. Manzil al-Aqnān, p.6.

178. Op.cit., pp.207-12; perhaps Ṣalāḥ 'Abd al-Ṣabūr was the first poet to mention al-Sandabād in this context in his poem "Riḥlah fi 'l-Lail", but his presentation of al-Sandabād here was a minor theme in the poem; an interesting verse in description of al-Sandabād is this: "السندباد كالاعصار يخلو أو يعصف", Al-Nās fī Bilādi, pp.47-8, verse is on page 48.

179. As quoted by Colin C. Campbell, "The Transformation of Biblical Myth: MacLeish's Use of the Adam and Job Stories", Myth and Symbol, by Northrop Frye and others, second edition, Lincoln, 1964, p.84.

180. From his poem, "Qālū li Ayyūb", Manzil al-Aqnān, pp.114-5.

181. From his poem, "Nafs wa Qabr", Iqbāl, p.54.

182. From his poem, "Fī Ghābat al-Ẓalām", ibid., p.46.

183. From his poem, "Nafs wa Qabr", p.56.

184. "Al-Tanāquḍāt fi 'l-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā", Shi'r, No.39, Summer, 1968, p.119.

185. See his lovely poem, "Mir'āh li Khālidah", Al-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā, pp.224-7; see also his poem "Ru'yā" where he says:

فرأيت كيف يضيئني كفني
ورأيت ... ليت الموت يحملني

Aghāni Mihyār, p.162.

186. On Poetry, trans. W.H. Auden, New York, 1961, p.11.

187. Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, under MYTH.

188. "Al-Tanāquḍāt fi 'l-Masraḥ wa 'l-Marāyā", p.122.

189. Ibid., p.123.

190. Ibid.; however, Adūnīs can also write poetry of vision and tenderness, as in the following from his poem "Al-Ṣaqr" :

١ــ من يريد طريقا من البرق ٤ــ فرس حولها يدور :
٢ــ من يشتهي السماء ٥ــ من هنا تبدأ الطريق
٣ــ وهي حبلى باحلامه ، والطريق ٦ــ من هنا يبدأ العبور

Kitāb al-Taḥawwulāt, pp.76-7.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing survey of trends and movements in contemporary Arabic poetry, an attempt has been made to trace these trends in the various Arab countries and in al-Mahjar with the aim of showing the continuity of the line of development of Arabic poetry in this century. The experiments were usually coloured by the cultural traditions and local characteristics of the Arab countries of origin. Far from being isolated, they were inter-dependent. The main stream of Arabic poetry in this century can be likened to the undulating course of a river making its way from one Arab country to another where important experiments were carried out, being fed by streams and rivulets from other Arab countries. While a great poetic activity would first flourish then decline in the various capitals of the Arab world, the main stream of poetry went on steadily and with increasing strength winding its way all the time towards greater affinity with world poetry.

In order to furnish a true line of continuity, it had been necessary to examine the background of this poetry with a view to tracing some of the poetic traditions which played an important part in influencing the contemporary scene. Thus it has been possible to trace the beginning of certain trends which played an important part in the development of poetry in this century: Damascene conservatism, the Egyptian tendency to concentrate mainly on the Egyptian contribution, the Christian tradition in Arabic literature, the strong poetic traditions in nineteenth century Iraq, etc.

No study of current Arabic poetry can afford to neglect the achievements of poetry in this century, or to overlook the relativity of the present situation to the one preceding. The fifties and sixties saw an unprecedented revolution in Arabic poetry, which touched every aspect of the poem. But this revolution was not the mere creation of this period. It has been the main purpose of this work to show that this revolution was fundamentally dependent on continuous experimentation in poetry in the

preceding decades, which made the tools of poetry more flexible and gave the poets a deeper experience on which to build. The various schools, movements and trends have been examined as fully as is possible in this context. The experiments of the current period can be seen as a synthesis of the achievements of the Arab poetic creativity in this century. Ideally, current avant-garde poetry adopts the Romantic capacity of self expression, of investing the world with emotion and insistence on actual experience; the Symbolist economy and exploitation of the connotative and evocative power of words, and neo-Classical terseness and mastery of expression. But it discards Romantic sentimentality, excessive spleen, dilution, the exaggerated use of adjectives, flabbiness of structure and dreaminess; the Symbolist cult of the Beautiful and the Ideal and extreme internalisation, and the neo-Classical rhetoricism, extreme externalisation and conventional forms. Current poetry also benefits from isolated experiments which did not belong directly to one school of poetry or another (such as the experiments of poets like al-Ṣāfi, al-Tal, Ṭūqān, etc.) as well as from Western poetic experiments such as those of the Imagists, T.S. Eliot, St. John Perse, Lorca and others in the West and from the social realist poets everywhere.

The fifties saw the disintegration of age-old assumptions about form and poetic diction as well as traditional attitudes in poetry. There has been indeed a long struggle in modern Arabic poetry to cross the frontiers of national limitations onto the wider international sphere of art. Political passion, which has been the major factor in initiating the first changes in the spirit, approach, diction, style and theme of Arabic poetry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, could not by itself continue to be a major influence on the artistic aspect of a poem. Other factors made themselves felt and it was the sum total of the individual's national, social, cultural, emotional and artistic experience which brought about the momentous changes in the fifties.

The 1948 Palestinian debacle was able to produce, therefore, a more sophisticated reaction in poetry, which showed itself in the spirit of

rejection, rebellion and sadness, which characterised the contribution of the various poets. Under the influence of this spirit, it was also possible to question andreject the whole sanctimonious boundaries of the poetic heritage. The new poetry is characterised by the loosening of metric forms, the insistence on conciseness and economy, on terseness of expression, on concreteness of imagery, on contemporaniety of spirit, on the tendency towards a language and rhythm nearer to the language and rhythms of common speech and on a modern day poetic idiom.

It was regretable that there was no scope in this work to deal with many authors for whom I have great admiration and affection, but who would certainly fit into more specialised studies. It was not possible to discuss any but the authors more characteristic of the periods examined. This necessary omission should not be understood to indicate that the authors discussed are the only worthwhile ones in contemporary Arabic poetry, but rather that those with whom we have dealt are more representative of the achievements and faults of the period than are the others.

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There is no doubt that Arabic poetry is now passing through an acute phase of experimentation. Even more fundamental experiments in this poetry are yet to be made. Everything in current Arab life is dynamic, and despite the fact that modern Arabs are now decisively oriented towards technology, poetry still plays an important part in their culture and, one feels, will once again prove to be the first medium of expression of a quickly changing sensibility.

One predicts greater changes in metrics, and it is probable that the foregoing experiments will prove to have been only the beginning of a drastic change in the rhythm and music of Arabic poetry. One suspects that these changes will be concentrated at the beginning on the intricate and highly varied metric forms of the Arabs where the real adventure lies. So far the attempts at writing poetry in the medium of prose have been prompted mainly by similar experiments in the West, notably French, not by real artistic need

at the time. The great potentialities of Arabic metric forms have not been explored yet, let alone exhausted, and it is these and not prose that will be the target of experimentalists at this next stage. With all the foregoing experiments in these forms, they have now become malleable enough for further experiments of a more drastic nature. We have seen how, so far, only very few poets have had the courage to produce, consciously or unconsciously, their own metric forms which deviated from basic rules of Arabic prosody. It is feasible that in the near future more poets would follow these pioneers and furnish their own metric forms. It is also possible and probable that a tendency towards more accentual rhythms will impose itself.

I have tried in this work to follow the gradual development of the language of contemporary Arabic poetry, and have shown how it was capable of lending itself, within a comparatively short period of time, to the varied experiments of the neo-Classicists, the Romantics, the Symbolists, the factual direct approach of some neo-Realists and all the obliquities of the current period. There is every sign that the language of poetry continues to change to suit an evolving era. Poets will in the future show greater audacity in the use of language and both the language of common speech and the Classical vocabulary will be utilised for greater wealth of poetic expression. The development of greater affinity with common speech and folk poetry will undoubtedly affect the rhythms of poetry and will prompt further experimentation in the music of verse.

The tone of Arabic poetry in the coming years will be subject to the psychological changes which in turn depend on the general developments of the life of the individual and the nation. The tone of dread and protest which had dominated Arabic poetry before the 1967 war could have given way after the war to one of bitter irony, were it not for the rise of a new faith and a new hope in the nation. This is now changing the tone of poetry to one of confidence, and at present the note of anger is mixed with hope and self-assurance. Sadness and terror no longer seem to have any more place in this poetry. Neither does there seem to be any place for

merriment or even for light-hearted sarcasm, although the present mood will probably lead to a louder tone.

Poets will show greater audacity and the whole of life will be utilized to coin new images. Concreteness in imagery will be sustained. However, two tendencies in the use of images have already left a bad influence on the rising generation: the tendency to use too many excessively repellent images in one poem, and the tendency to an exaggeratedly illogical connection between the paired subjects. It is the task of criticism to be vigilant and to warn the young poets of these dangers before they fall into such a shallow trap.

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The need for a modern, well-guided criticism is greatly felt now. There is a great flux of poems and an even greater flux of concepts which are often contradictory. These pour on the Arab world from East and West, and critics are still dependent greatly on Western poetic criticism.

There is great need for an informed discussion of the technical aspects of Arabic poetry now, for these are undergoing great changes. The criticism needed in this aspect should stem from both a well-informed knowledge of the poetic process in general, and a deep knowledge of the particular aspects of Arabic poetry, especially prosody. It is only with such a thorough understanding that a Western educated critic can make an authentic contribution. Often critics have either adhered to a traditional outlook which assumes that some important aspects of Arabic poetry are permanent and unchangeable except in a very moderate way, or have applied, sometimes quite indiscriminately, a purely Western outlook. Many critical accounts have been offered without an informed aesthetic perception and many poetic experiments have been undeservedly treated as masterpieces of creativity.

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So long as contemporary poetry continues to develop, and while experiments are still carried out in form and content, these changes ought

to be observed, studied and recorded. The present work is only a survey intended to provide a panoramic and one hopes, clear, view. It is set out to provide a basis for further specialized studies, and should it prove successful in this task, then it will have served its main objective.

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ERRATA

P.20 In the title of R. al-Khouri's book the word "Firansiyyah" is missing; the title should read: Al-Fikr al-'Arabi 'l-Ḥadīth wa Athar al-Thaurah al-Firansiyyah fī Taujīhihi 'l-Siyāsi wa 'l-Ijtimā'i.

P.88 8th line: the phrase "of the publication" is missing after encouragement.

P.112 4th line from below: please read "a wistful feeling of loss".

P.179 8th line: an "a" is missing before "liberation".

P.185 9th line: "was" is missing after accomplished.

P.328 Please read following verses:

ان جسم المرء للروح التى فيه يقوت
فاذا ما مات جسم المرء فالروح تموت

instead of these:

ليست الشمس من الشرق الى المغرب تسير
انما الارض من الغرب الى الشرق تدور

P.342 5th line: "was" is missing after "poetry".

P.350 Footnotes 8 should be 9, 9 should be 10 and 10 should be 8.

P.567 Footnote 24, second line: a whole line is missing after "An Egyptian writer"; please read: "An Egyptian writer, Raḍwān Ibrāhīm, in an article entitled "Ta'bīn Abī Shādi bi Miṣr".

P.570 Footnote 94: the word "Mayyitah" is missing in title of poem after "Al-Ḥadīqah".

P.731 Footnotes 9 and 19: title of H. Peyre's essay should read "A French Debate on Pure Poetry".

P.732 Footnote 41: Please read "Englewood Cliffs, 1962," after "Peyre".

P.824 Footnote 32: title of Ṭayib's book should read Al-Murshid ilā Fahm Ash'ār al-'Arab wa Ṣinā'atihā.

P.893. In note, second line, please read: "the ratio of most popular metres used".

P.940 Footnote 11, as p.824.

P.942 Footnote 49 is missing. It should read: See above p.783.

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